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## TRIBAL MEDICINE: DIVINERS AND HERBALISTS

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### SYNOPSIS

*The survival of African tribal medicine is discussed in relation to its legal status and therapeutical value. There are indications that it was not grossly deficient, at the time when White settlement began, in relation to either tribal needs or European medical practice. The associated pattern of ideas in tribal society is surveyed, and a parallel is drawn with attitudes to magic in European mediaeval society. Modern medicine is now firmly based on scientific method; tribal medicine remains essentially unscientific. If European precedent is followed, superstitious beliefs are likely to decline as the number of Africans trained in science and rational thought increases.*

South Africans owe their medical skills and ideas in varying proportions to modern science and African tribal lore, with a trace of Islamic and Hindu influence.

The tribal portion represents the earlier, more primitive stage in the history of medicine, and receives scant respect from the state or the medical profession. It is destined to lose its fight against the law, an erosive modernity, the greater efficacy of hospitals and trained physicians, and the 'new' diseases like tuberculosis and poliomyelitis that fall outside the range of tribal skills. But the tribal practitioner's combination of magical and empirical remedies continues to bring comfort and some relief to many, perhaps most, Africans.

Its survival reflects a capacity for adaptation, as well as the tenacity of custom, but must be attributed mainly to shortcomings in the educational and health services available to Africans. Because of these defects, magical practices persist in spite of the law.

The legal status of diviners and herbalists is determined by the Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Act of 1928. This consolidated 16 earlier

laws enacted to protect the public from the activities of unqualified persons, and practitioners from their competition. Section 34(a), adopted after ten years of opposition from faith-healers, hydropaths, neuropaths and other exponents of unorthodox medical cults, enacts that anyone not registered as a medical practitioner commits an offence if, for gain, he practises as one or performs any act specially belonging to a doctor's calling.

The courts have ruled<sup>1</sup> that a medical practitioner's main functions are to diagnose, advise, prescribe or treat, and that only a registered practitioner may diagnose, prescribe or treat for gain. The effect is that a person who sells patent medicines or herbs may recommend his wares, and even advise his customers as to their properties and merits, provided that any charge he makes is for the medicines supplied and not for diagnosing the disease or prescribing a remedy.<sup>2</sup>

These restraints apply also to tribal medicine men and herbalists. They may dispense, but cannot diagnose for a fee. The only exceptions are in Natal, where licensed *izinyanga zokwelapha*

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<sup>1</sup>Greene v. Rex, 1905, T.S. 595.

<sup>2</sup>Rex v. Mpunzi, 1938, EDL 317.



and *izinyanga zemithi*—those skilled in healing and herbs—may practise among Africans for gain, even to the extent of performing surgical operations. Policy is aimed at their gradual elimination, however: no new licences may be issued to an *inyanga* without an order from the Minister<sup>1</sup>, and this is seldom granted. The number of licensed medicine men fell from 1,352 in 1929 to 322 in 1934<sup>2</sup>, and has remained constant since then.<sup>3</sup> Many—2,750 according to an early estimate<sup>4</sup>—practise illegally without a licence.

Diviners—the so-called ‘witch-doctors’—are in a different position. They specialize in diagnosis, particularly of supernatural causes, by means of various kinds of divination, including clairvoyance and ‘bone-throwing’. The Natal Code of Native Law<sup>5</sup> forbids them to practise for gain, and they risk prosecution under Section 34(a) of the Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Act if they do so anywhere. If a diviner accuses a person of having caused sickness by non-natural means, he commits an offence against the Witchcraft Laws.<sup>6</sup>

These provisions have not deterred herbalists and diviners from practising in both urban and rural areas throughout the Union. They have formed professional associations, registered companies, and in at least one instance, launched an ambitious project for training young Africans in the profession. Herbalists sell herbs, bark, bones, skins and other nostrums under a general dealer’s licence, and patent medicines under a patent medicine dealer’s licence. If, at the same time, they ‘advise’ clients, a prosecutor may have difficulty in proving that this amounts to ‘diagnosing’ or ‘prescribing’, or that the fee charge included an amount for the advice given.

Because of these difficulties, or because of

complacency on the part of the police and administration, herbalists and diviners are rarely prosecuted. A new Witchcraft Bill was passed this year (1957), to unify pre-Union Statutes and increase penalties, but the Minister was unable to say how many persons have been prosecuted or convicted under these laws.<sup>7</sup> Health authorities, however, have no hesitation in denouncing herbalists as quacks who prey on superstition, credulity and ignorance. Medical practitioners generally share this opinion, and also complain of competition at the hands of the *inyanga*<sup>8</sup>.

### *The Value of Tribal Medicine*

There is actually little hard fact on which to base an opinion. While the properties of tribal drugs have been investigated more fully in the Union than in other African territories,<sup>9</sup> there is as yet no adequate study of the value and effect of the remedies as used by the herbalist. The neglect is due partly to the intolerance and contempt of the professional classes towards tribal culture, and in part to a misconception of the nature and historical significance of its medical arts. This misunderstanding calls for further comment.

Most of us know that tribal medicine has not freed itself from magic and superstition, but we are inclined to forget that this was also the state of European medicine up to the 16th and 17th centuries. Indeed, even the medical historian, searching the medieval records for the antecedents of his science, and abstracting the rational, empirical elements, is likely to ignore the occultism, charlatanism and credulity to which they were subordinated. One has to look to the writings of cultural historians and anthropologists for an account of medicine’s superstitious

<sup>1</sup>Section 98(2), Act 13 of 1928.

<sup>2</sup>An. Rep., Dept. Pub. Health, U.G. 40/34, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>See House of Assembly Debates, 19th Feb., 1957.

<sup>4</sup>Report of Comm. into Training of Natives in Med. and Pub. Health, U.G. 35 of 1928, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Section 129, Proc. No. 168, 1932.

<sup>6</sup>Witchcraft Suppression Act, 1957, consolidating and repealing pre-Union Statutes.

<sup>7</sup>House of Assembly Debates, 8th Feb., 1957, col. 806.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Report of S.C. on Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Bill, S.C. 5-24, p. 66; C. Leipoldt, *Bushveld Doctor*, 1937, pp. 216-7; J. B. McCord, “The Zulu witchdoctor and medicine man”, S.A.A.A.S., 1918, 306-18.

<sup>9</sup>See A. Smith, 1888, *A Contribution to South African Materia Medica*; J. M. Watt and M. G. Breyer-Brandwijk, *Medicinal and poisonous plants of South Africa*, 1932.



adjuncts: astrology, oneiromancy, necromancy, chiromancy, magic, sorcery and demonology, where men looked for both the causes and cure of disease.

This bifurcation has conferred on medieval medicine an air of rationalism which it does not deserve, but which is denied to tribal medicine by a curious reversal of the roles of the medical and sociological observer. A person trained in modern medicine, and only dimly aware of its cultural origins, may be curious about the exotic nature of African divination and even have some faith in its pretensions, but is usually scornful about the value of the herbalist's arts which are so obviously inferior to his own. The work of discovering and recording the remedies of the medicine man is therefore attempted by the anthropologist, who is seldom qualified to judge their therapeutic value and necessarily stresses the magical element in tribal medicine.

Such investigations as have been made establish the existence of a substantial core of rational and useful knowledge in the medicine man's techniques. He cannot explain the causes of disease in terms acceptable to the scientist, any more than he can explain satisfactorily the growth of plants from seeds, but he knows remedies for diseases just as he knows how to plant and tend seeds in order to produce food-stuffs. This knowledge is traditional and most effective in dealing with complaints that are indigenous to tribal society. But herbalists were always trying out new medicines; and this capacity for learning and adaptation is retained by the white-coated *inyanga* of today who, presiding over a shop stocked with patent medicines, herbs, bark, skins, bones and powders, attends to clients suffering from diseases of modern life.

There is not enough reliable information for a definitive assessment of the African's response to the challenge of disease in his traditional society, but there is evidence that surgical and medical skills were advanced in many African

societies, and that the Southern African peoples were not among the most backward. If allowance is made for their freedom from the plagues and crowd diseases of industrialized, urban civilizations, we might reasonably conclude that their medicine was not grossly inadequate in relation to their needs.

This, at any rate, was the opinion of early writers, who saw the people in their original tribal state. They were admittedly, prone to generalize widely after only a casual and superficial acquaintance. The evidence of one like Lichtenstein,<sup>1</sup> himself a doctor of medicine, naturalist and noted observer, must, however, be treated with respect. He found that diseases were but little known among the Xhosa, whom he visited in 1803-4; that they treated fevers, 'the most dangerous complaint', with empirical remedies, including local bleeding by means of a cow's horn 'in the manner of a cupping glass', but attributed recovery to the effects of being disenchanted: 'their *materia medica* is rich in those nonsensical kind of remedies which we should call sympathetic'.

Peter Kolbe,<sup>2</sup> another early traveller of note, praised the Khoi-Khoi surgeons: 'they were very clever in using their knives and besides being able to amputate limbs in a very efficient way, they also performed operations which the Europeans at that time could not have done.' Mathew Hewat,<sup>3</sup> writing only 50 years ago, spoke of the Xhosa *amaggira awokuqaphula* (lit. doctors of blood-letting) as showing 'considerable surgical skill'.

Meagre references in the literature on different tribes show that they practised blood-letting and cupping, cautery to blister painful spots or open abscesses, incision and excision of tumours, drawing out of dislocated or broken limbs and setting by means of splints or clay casts with antiseptic herbs. Rare cases of trepanning and caesarian section have been recorded, but operations on the skull, pleural cavity and abdomen

<sup>1</sup>*Travels in Southern Africa*, V.R.S., I, 310 ff. For a similar but much later estimate see Mathew Hewat, *Bantu Folk Lore (Medical and General)*, 1906, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Cit. H. S. N. Menko, *Contributions of the Netherlands to the Development of South African Medicine (1652-1902)*, 1954, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 47.



could not be expected at the prevailing low level of anatomical and physiological knowledge, antisepsis, anaesthesia and surgical equipment.

The tribesmen's knowledge of plants and their properties was, in contrast, large and exact. Their pharmacology has been described, though not fully evaluated, by physicians, and must be credited with having definite physiological as well as psychological value. Herbalists of different tribes used the same plants, often under different names, to expel worms, excite vomiting and purging, or treat snake bite, dysentery, ring-worm, lumbago, ophthalmia, malaria, fevers and other symptoms. Junod<sup>1</sup> distinguished 20 prescriptions containing from 40 to 50 drugs, administered by means of 'outward application, inhalation, fumigation, infusion, decoction, inoculation, manducation or carbonised or pulverised drugs, etc.'

The *platteland* white population, so far from dismissing these concoctions as worthless, learned to apply them to the treatment of their own ailments. Among the drugs used by both Europeans and Africans were the arum lily leaf for treating sores, boils, gout and rheumatism; rooi wortel (*Bulbine alooides* Willd.) to 'purify' blood and for diarrhoea; dagga (*Leonotis leonurus*), a purgative and remedy for chronic skin disease; geneesblaar (*Withania somnifera* Dun.), widely used as a remedy against intestinal parasites, asthma, syphilis and sepsis, and by White people in the Orange Free State for chest troubles, piles and erysipelas; *loranthaceae*, the powdered bark of which serves the Zulu as an emema and the European as a specific for warts, epilepsy and looseness of bowels; the buttercup to treat coughs, venereal sores and stomach disorders, and cancerous sores in Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

These remedies may seem primitive and unlikely to the modern physician who knows little about herbs and relies instead on the vast output of the great chemical firms and laboratories. Tribal drugs must have seemed less contemptible

to the doctor of 100 years ago, however, for he also depended largely on natural medicaments.

Such a one was F. L. C. Biccard. Among the first South African-born Whites to qualify in medicine, he practised at Durban, Cape Town, and Malmesbury in the middle of the last century, and wrote a medical handbook<sup>3</sup> for the farming community, in which he described the known ailments and their treatment. If he was representative of his profession, one must conclude that the physician at that time was able to identify a wide range of common ailments, but showed no understanding of the principles of infection, and usually erred when trying to explain the causes of disease. He practised a symptomatic therapy, made up of diet, rest, warmth and herbal preparations, with excessive reliance on purgatives, blood-letting and brandy. He had more drugs at his disposal than those in the *inyanga's* pharmacopeia, but we cannot say confidently that the physician's remedies had a greater life-saving value.

### *Medicine and Magic*

Yet there was a great difference between their attitudes towards disease. The Biccards of the last century had freed their art from gross superstition and learned to look on disease as a natural event, explicable in terms of physiological processes and curable by rational methods. The tribal practitioner, in contrast, attributed disease, like accident and other troubles, indifferently to magic or natural causes.

Such a belief—held, until quite recently, by all peoples—stems from a certain concept of matter and causality. It was not made explicit, for the tribal African did not expound his ideas of the nature of being or present them in abstract, systematic and precise terms. His concepts remained for the most part esoteric, vague and unorganized. The theory has to be inferred from actions, formulae and oracular statements; and is likely to suffer distortion when expressed as

<sup>1</sup>*Op. cit.*, II, 468.

<sup>2</sup>Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup>*Volksgeneeskunde voor Zuid Afrika*. Juta, 1866.



abstract propositions in the terminology and framework of present-day religion, philosophy and science.

Expressed in general terms and in disregard of tribal variations,<sup>1</sup> the tribesman's notion of the universe may be described as a belief that it is both natural and supernatural, or, to be more precise, preternatural, if we understand by this term an extension of the natural into a metaphysical and non-material sphere. All forms of life and substance are regarded as being charged with or subject to a supernatural force. This is not defined.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there is no word for it in Southern Bantu languages. Its existence is assumed as self-evident and beyond dispute, and as much a part of reality as any material thing. It may operate directly or through matter, at the instance of people or spirits, and for good or for evil, and its actual or potential effect has to be taken into account in any situation or enterprise.

In keeping with this basic concept, the tribal theory of causality draws no distinction between materialistic and supernaturalistic explanations. There are no equivalent terms in the languages for natural and supernatural, corporeal and incorporeal, empirical and transcendental. Natural and preternatural ideas are complementary, not distinct; they form a single, consistent body of knowledge. Natural substance and causes are recognized, but always as operating in conjunction with the supernatural.

The failure to distinguish conceptually between reality and illusion is demonstrated in magical practices and an associated tendency to identify both the natural and an assumed preternatural order with the social order. Relations between things or between spirits are supposed to correspond to the relations between people. The preternatural world is an extension, rather than a reflection, of the actual, known world.

This combination of myth and reality into a unified, consistent body of ideas seems odd and 'primitive' to modern man, accustomed though hardly reconciled to the contradictions between his materialistic science and a metaphysical cosmology. The tribesman's system is, of course, the earlier, but one is apt to forget that it prevailed everywhere down to the dawn of the scientific era. The germ of the division between materialism and supernaturalism was present also in tribal society, and appeared in the contrasting functions of the empirically-minded herbalist and psychic diviner. However, as that formidable rationalist, John Mackinnon Robinson, pointed out,<sup>3</sup> 'sceptical personalities would in the long run fail to affirm themselves as against the institutions of ordinary savage religion—the seasonal feasts, the ceremonies attending birth and death, the use of rituals, images, charms, sorcery, all tending to stimulate and conserve supernatural beliefs in general'.

Resting on supernaturalistic premises, but containing a solid core of sound, practical knowledge and techniques, the tribal version fulfilled the need both for logical, coherent interpretation of the universe and effective action in terms of physiological and psychological satisfaction. These qualities must be emphasized to correct prevailing notions of the 'savage's' alleged intellectual inferiority and 'prelogical' methods of thought.

A number of writers,<sup>4</sup> anxious to refute these wrong notions, have gone much further by describing magical pragmatism<sup>5</sup> as a kind of science. If the claim amounts to more than the assertion of an analogy, it has a practical as well as theoretical significance.

There is an outward resemblance. Divination, like science, stems from mankind's stubborn

<sup>1</sup>For an admirable description see A. W. Hoernlé in *The Bantu-speaking tribes of South Africa* (ed. I. Schapera), ch. X (1937).

<sup>2</sup>The concept of an all-pervasive power is more definite and explicit in some tribes than in others. Cf. G. W. Harley, *African Native Medicine*, 1941, ch. II. For a general discussion of African tribal philosophy see P. Tempels, *Bantoe-Filosofie*, 1946.

<sup>3</sup>*A History of Freethought*, 1936, I, 45.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, 1937; J. D. Krige, "Bantu medical conceptions", *Theoria*, 1954, 50-65; M. Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, IV.

<sup>5</sup>Pragmatism: a theory of evaluation by results (Cf. H. K. Wells, *Pragmatism*, 1954).



refusal to submit passively to disease, death, and other adversity. Both are designed to cope with and control nature. Both provide evidence of an enquiring mind, and involve trial and error. New spells, as well as new medicines, can be tried, or old ones applied to new situations. The adaptability of magical beliefs is one reason for their survival, also among the educated classes. For magic is used to get jobs, win a football match, dodge the law or induce employers to raise wages.

Magic begins where scientific knowledge ends. One is therefore tempted to identify the two, or regard magic as a substitute for science. Yet they are incompatibles. The sense of security that magic provides is false; the control that it is supposed to confer, an illusion. It diverts the inquiring mind from reality and obstructs the discovery of laws and techniques that give man real mastery over nature. It obscures and inhibits the growth of the rational elements in medicine and other branches of knowledge.

People who think that spells are as important as seed for the growth of plants, who use both charms and herbs to treat disease, can never be sure as to which ingredient is the cause of success or failure. They have no way of isolating natural from supposed supernatural forces, and cannot therefore recognize a wholly natural process explicable in terms of materialistic causation. Any event or situation may, if events warrant, bring the pattern of magic into play. A common ailment that does not yield to the herbalists' drugs, as well as a more serious or less familiar disease, may be put down to the work of an unfriendly spirit, sorcerer or witch. Even if the proximate cause of a disaster is known and correctly diagnosed, such as a fall of rock or the failure of a car's steering gear, an ultimate cause may be found in an evil supernatural force aimed against the victim. It is because many Africans confuse "natural" and "supernatural" processes that they continue to invoke, often for the same

malady, the services of diviner, herbalist, and medical scientist.

Science is the discovery of reality, whereas the mixture of magic and pragmatism obscures reality. To confuse the two, says Ackerknecht,<sup>1</sup> shows a 'misunderstanding of the history and essence of science which is bound to be fatal for a culture which, for better or worse, is based on science'. The defence of magic not only delays the spread of rationalism, but also lends countenance to policies that keep people in a state of superstition, ignorance and inferiority. There is no other suitable description for the suggestion by the Secretary for Native Affairs,<sup>2</sup> at one time a practising anthropologist, that to discourage African patients from sleeping with their heads under blankets, nurses should tell them, not that oxygen is good but that the *tokoloshe* is less dangerous than they think.

### *Decline of Magic*

Sorcery, witchcraft, and evil spirits can be tolerated where they have been reduced to the level of historical and literary oddities—in fact, to 'fairy tales'—and no longer interfere with the business of getting and spending. This condition, which arises when the economic process is firmly planted on scientific principles and practices, is barely 200 years old in the western hemisphere. Its formal recognition dates from the repeal of the laws under which witches could be burnt. The English Act of 1736, repealing the witchcraft law of James I, provided for the punishment of persons who claimed to possess magical powers, but it was the pretence and not the witchcraft that constituted the offence. In the eyes of the law, witchcraft had changed from a grim reality into a fraud, "though persecution and trial by swimming persisted until well into the nineteenth century".<sup>3</sup>

Before then, most people seemed to have believed in witches, sorcerers, vampires and werewolves.<sup>4</sup> There were few avowed sceptics,

<sup>1</sup>'Disease and treatment in primitive medicine', *Bull. of the Hist. of Medicine*, 1946, XIX, 489.

<sup>2</sup>Evidence before Select Committee on Subject of Nursing Amendment Bill, S.C. 5-56, p. 00.

<sup>3</sup>J. B. Lingsbury, "The last witch of England", *Folk-Lore*, 1950, LXI, 144.

<sup>4</sup>As described by Montague Summers, a contemporary believer, in *The Werewolf*, 1933, etc.



even in the educated classes. Universities gave approved courses in demonology. Eminent theologians, catholic and protestant, scholars, doctors, judges and monarchs, were convinced that devils and their human associates used magic to kill unborn infants, people, animals and plants: 'hurt, and infect men and beasts, vines, corn, cattle, plants, make women abortive, not to conceive, barren, men and women unapt and unable, married and unmarried, fifty several ways', wrote Burton<sup>1</sup> in the early 17th century. There could be no method of distinguishing 'natural' sickness from sickness caused by witchcraft for 'general causes (of disease) are either supernatural or natural. Supernatural are from God and His angels, or, by God's permission, from the devil and his ministers'.<sup>2</sup> Any sickness, but preferably one that came on suddenly or was incurable, might be attributed to witchcraft.

This is like the tribesman's theory, but there is a difference. In the pagan world, magic was feared and suppressed only when used for evil ends. The medieval society, on the other hand, condemned all forms of magic. The 'white' witch or wise woman, using both drugs and spells to cure, and skilled in love charms and divination, was as liable as the alleged devil-worshipper to persecution. The Christian church, seeing in magic a survival of old pagan beliefs, denounced all magic, white or black, as heresy.

Witchcraft was not sharply distinguished from the dogmatic heresies that preceded the Reformation. Medieval society saw in both the witch and the sectarian a challenge to the existing order.<sup>3</sup> The real danger to the nobility and the church came, however, from the process that transformed feudalism into the dynamic capitalist economy.

Science made a decisive contribution to this change. But the practical benefits of science were too conspicuous for it to be treated as a heresy. It is true that scientists who indiscreetly failed to couch their theories in a form acceptable to the theologians might suffer the fate that

overtook Galileo, Vesalius, Servetus and Bruno in the 16th and 17th centuries, and be forced to recant, do penance, or burn at the stake. Yet this intimidation could only delay, not stifle, the technical advances and scientific discoveries associated with the upheavals known as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, the Netherlands' Golden Age, the English Civil War, and the French Revolution.

By the beginning of the last century, the western world had abandoned the unified outlook of all previous societies. Supernatural beliefs had been relegated to the periphery of practical life. They continued to regulate ethics and buttress social institutions, but had no place in the urgent matters of producing and selling goods, making war and preserving health. All this was the domain of science, where the scientist, exercising supreme authority, performed wonders that gain him the implicit credulity hitherto reserved for the diviner priest.

The convulsions that tore Europe out of its superstitious setting spread elsewhere in the wake of imperialist expansion to revolutionize the lives of Asians, Americans and Africans. The upheaval came to them from without, an alien force in the form of gunpowder and shot, land-grabbing settlers, traders, labour recruiters, proselytizing missionaries, tax collectors, native commissioners and police. Their self-seeking, exploiting actions obscured the scientific rationalism on which their supremacy rested. They hit out at the witch-doctor who, as guardian of the old order, led the opposition against them, but gave only grudgingly of the knowledge and skills that alone could free minds from the entanglement of magic. They brought the machine, and forced the black man to work it, but taught him none of the secrets of its making.

The scientific revolution has come to Africa, not as the universal heritage of all men, but as 'white man's knowledge', something distinct from and incompatible with tribal beliefs and

<sup>1</sup>*The Anatomy of Melancholy*, (ed. F. Dell and P. Jordan-Smith), 177.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. J. and A. Romein, *De Lage Landen by de Zee*, 1940, ch. 8 (de Haan).



practices. It will become part of the African's tradition when he has mastered its theory and practice, and made his own contribution to its further growth. African mathematicians, chemists, physicists, biologists, engineers, architects, sociologists, will create the intellectual climate in which superstitions wither, also in the masses.

Medicine as yet is the only branch of science that meets this need, both by admitting Africans as students and practitioners, and through the beneficial treatment of the sick. Doctors, more than other representatives of science, have been disinterested and generous in placing their knowledge and skills at the service of all, irrespective of race. This has not been enough

to extinguish superstition, but there has been great progress, perhaps more in the Union than elsewhere in Africa. Here no 'medicine murders' occur, witches are not burnt, and accusations of witchcraft, even if resulting in a 'smelling out' ceremony, are likely to involve the witchfinder in an action for damages for defamation.<sup>1</sup> Superstitious beliefs and practices, though still prevalent, no longer deter Africans from using the available medical and hospital services. These are big gains, and must be accepted as evidence of a remarkable capacity for adaptation when viewed against the background of tribal culture, race discrimination, and history of modern medicine in the Union.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Mitlangu ya vafana va Vatsonga.** D. P. MAROLEN. Swiss Mission in South Africa, Johannesburg. 1954. 67 pp. 3s. 6d.

This little book purports to encourage the playing of Tsonga games. It describes 39 games, played by boys, mainly from the Northern Transvaal.

It is a difficult task to explain a game so that people not knowing it shall be able to benefit from the description given. On the whole, Marolen has given detailed instructions, and in most cases these are clear and presumably sufficient to enable one to play the game correctly. However, in other cases, one gets the impression that the author is carried away by the desire for achieving literary effect, at the expense of the explanation itself; the style becomes heavy, some of the words used are highly dialectal and clarity suffers. For a work of this type, clarity and simplicity should be the main object of the author, and this is not always found in this book. Two games are illustrated by drawings. A greater use of the latter would have made the

task of the writer simpler and his explanations clearer.

If one can believe Marolen's sometimes peculiar and totally non-Tsonga spelling of technical terms, many of these are of foreign origin. Are these words widely and truly accepted by most Tsonga speakers? Would it not have been better to look for other forms more generally known?

*Mitlangu ya vafana va Vatsonga* has more than its share of spelling and printing errors. A few mistakes are possibly inevitable in books of this type, but this unusually high number of errors and inconsistencies of spelling constantly shock the reader; furthermore, they do not set a very good example to the young people for whom this book was written.

Although this work is not a great literary achievement, it deserves warm praises for the anthropological value of its contents. Many more books of this kind, purporting to preserve various aspects of Tsonga culture, should be written by Tsonga people who know and love their own folklore and traditions.

P-D. COLE-BEUCHAT

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Miya v. Miya* and others, 1947, NAC (T & N), 108; *Ziqubu v. Ziqubu*, 1954 (2) NAC, 72.



## A RESERVE FROM WITHIN<sup>1</sup>

A. VILAKAZI\*

### SYNOPSIS

*Africans are not, as is popularly believed, a culturally homogeneous group. They belong to different classes which can be correlated to the different agents of change at work in the reserves, each of which produces a specific type of human end-product.*

*Christianity produces personalities and communities with value-systems, attitudes and characteristic patterns of behaviour which differentiate them sharply from Traditionalists who form the cultural base-line from which the Christians have evolved. As a group the Christians are progressive, West-orientated, and their whole world-view is supported by the Christian ethic.*

*The products of secular agents, commerce, industry and the migratory labour system, are that disorganized, irresponsible and hedonistic flotsam and jetsam of African society whom the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribesmen call amaGxagxa. This is the group on whom generalizations are made about educated and Christian Africans, although it is neither Christian nor educated.*

*Lastly there are the Traditionalists who strenuously resist change in an attempt to stop cultural disorganization, and to re-establish the equilibrium and norms of the old society. This is the group on which the Tomlinson Report bases its generalisations on African life and cultures. It is, however, a fast disappearing group.*

This paper is designed primarily to paint a background picture to our thinking about the Reserves by giving a dynamic rather than a static picture of life in them. My illustrations will come from a typical Natal Reserve on which live the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribes in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, near Botha's Hill. It seems to me necessary that such a picture should be drawn as a corrective to the all-too-common tendency to paint a static picture of African life in the Reserves and to give the impression of monolithic social structures—as if African systems of social organization were securely wrapped up in cellophane paper and therefore closed. Part One of the Tomlinson Report which purports to deal with "The Culture of the Bantu" (pp. 2-4), written in the present tense, and on

which all generalizations about the African peoples are based, is a good example of what I mean. It is true that certain changes are recorded in the Report (pp. 14-16) but these are not seen as significant for any practical steps that are suggested, or for the formulation of policy. The 'closed system' approach is very evident in the frequent use of "Bantu organisms"<sup>2</sup> (organism being the operative word) and in phrases like "the Zulu race" (p. 15), and the "racially" homogeneous Transkei (p. 51). It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the word "race" as used in this Report connotes a biological entity which is characterized by a race-bound culture; and that in the use of the word "organism", the authors forgot that they were using a metaphor.

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<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Institute of Social Research conference held at the University of Natal from July 16 to 22, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>Incidentally, it is of some interest to note that the European section of the community is seen as a single organism (p. 13) and not as two, or even three organisms, since there are cultural differences between the English, Afrikaans and the Jewish sections of the Europeans.



*Social Stratification among the Nyuswa and the Qadi Tribes*

Contrary to popular belief that all Africans belong to the same social class (evidence of which is the fact that every African male is a boy or a John to the Whites, and every woman a girl or an Annie) one finds among the Nyuswa and the Qadi Tribes, clear class distinctions which the people make and recognize in their every-day behaviour patterns. This social stratification is no longer based on the old "tier upon tier" principle which distinguished clearly between an aristocracy and a commonalty, both of which derived from inherited status. Status is now achieved or sometimes conferred on commoners by the Native Affairs Department which appoints chiefs (from among common people) who derive their social power from the White Government of which they are agents. (Conquest by the Whites had a general levelling-down effect.)

Among the Nyuswa the hereditary principle, which bestowed a mystical quality on the credentials of the chiefs by reason of its association with traditional custom and which therefore gave them a place of natural leadership, was removed when Sir Theophilus Shepstone sent the Nyuswa chief Mshiwa to the Port Shepstone area to rule over some tribes there. Likewise the Qadi section is ruled from the distance of Inanda, and, as the people truly observe, "This is the land of *izinduna*" (headmen). Both tribes are, in effect ruled by the chief's headmen, and the chief comes, perhaps once in six months, chiefly to confer with the Native Commissioner. The *indunas*, it will be noted, are not hereditary.

The first and most important distinction which the people make, and one which strikes a visitor immediately on his arrival, is one between the Christians or School People (*amakholwa* or *abantu basesikoleni*) and the non-Christians or heathens (*amabhinca*, or, as they are sometimes referred to contemptuously by the Christians, *amaqaba*, i.e. raw, uncultured, heathen people).

A closer acquaintance with the social situation, however, soon reveals another class which both

the Christians and the heathens recognize. This is what they call the *amagxagxa*.

Let us analyse the differences between these classes:

(a) *Amabhinca, or Non-Christians:*

The *amabhinca* are the so-called heathens or pagans. They are the traditionalists who adhere tenaciously to what they believe to be the Zulu traditional patterns of life: the visible manifestations of which are Zulu traditional dress with the *ibheshu* for men and the *isidwaba* (skin skirt) for women as standard articles of attire; the different typically Zulu hair-does for women ranging all the way from *isicholo* or *inhloko*, to the variously arranged tresses all done in red ochre; the slit ears decorated with beads or stumps of reeds or small painted blocks of wood (*iziqhaza*), etc. They are marked, too, by Zulu conservatism and by elaborate Zulu etiquette. Their marriages are still polygymous in fact or in intent (as when a man has one wife but is married by customary union, which leaves the way open for him to marry another wife).

The organization of the family and the division of labour in the home is still very much as it used to be in Zululand as far as we can ascertain from studies of the Zulus.<sup>1</sup> Even with this group, however, Western civilization in the shape of schools, hospitals, traders' stores, buses, taxis and the train and Western industry, has brought about notable changes. The women now use western materials instead of skins. Only a married or an engaged woman must still wear a skin skirt (*isidwaba*) but there is free use of vests, towels and other materials for all sorts of purposes; the men who would originally have used an *ibheshu* now use short trousers and shirts with their tails out. Food habits have changed markedly, and the influence of the East is very clearly seen in the very common use of pepper, curry powder and chillies as seasoning; the use of vegetables like brinjals, and the taste for curried meat

<sup>1</sup>Bryant, A. T.: *The Zulu People* (Shuter & Shooter, 1949) and Krige, E. J.: *Social System of the Zulu* (Longmans, 1936).



or chicken. Tea, sugar, salt and bread are very much in evidence in many homes, and most of the kitchen utensils are western.

However, the social values of this group derive from the Zulu traditional norms, and there is a conscious and freely expressed rejection of all European ways, and a clinging to the old traditional ones.

The numerical strength of this group, among the Nyuswa in particular, and the tremendous social pressures and sanctions which go with its numbers, are strong enough to win back many of its children, particularly girls who go to school and would otherwise be recruited into the Christian group. Thus many of the boys and girls who have had from three to six years of schooling revert back to traditional ways as soon as they leave school. They go to school to acquire reading and writing skills, and as soon as they get back home, they take off "the school clothes", and are forced to conform to the general pattern obtaining in their social environment. In a very real sense, then, the putting on and taking off of school clothes is a symbolic act of moving in and out of the two culture worlds in which they live during their school years. This is the group on which the Tomlinson Report bases its generalizations on African cultures.

(b) *Amakholwa or Abantu basesikoleni*:

This is the Christian group which is sometimes referred to as "school people". The alternative word is significant as it shows that in the African mind education and Christianity are interchangeable terms. A Christian is assumed to be educated, and an educated man to be a Christian. It is interesting, too, to note that while among the *amabhinca*, i.e. heathens, a child is told to take off his school clothes and don his *ibheshu* after school hours, among the Christians the child is told to put away the clean school clothes and put on the not-so-clean work-a-day ones. These remain the shirt and trousers for the boys and bloomers and dresses for the girls. The difference is important as it involves an attitude towards the human body and children are definitely

conditioned to particular reactions on the question of modesty. For the Christian, trousers and bloomers are important because they hide the genitals; so that it is not uncommon to find boys and girls whose only articles of wear are trousers and bloomers respectively and no other covering. Among the heathens, children move about in the nude at this stage.

The Christian group is characterized by specific cultural discontinuities vis-à-vis the Zulu traditional culture which is the parent culture. In general, much of their behaviour patterns and institutional life are informed by Christian teaching, but in many of their customs and habits one finds interesting syncretistic tendencies which give a Zulu idiom even to the obviously Christian institutions. Specifically, the Christians profess to adhere to the Christian principles of morality, the visible signs of which are European clothes for modesty, monogamous marriages contracted by Christian rites; the ideal of chastity before marriage, a rejection of the levirate (*ukungena* custom by which a man inherits his brother's wife or wives and raises seed to him) as being repugnant to Christian morality; a duty to send their children to school; a refined form of language purged of all vulgarities, using elegant euphemisms and tortuous circumlocutions. They are marked, too, by regular attendance in church; abstaining from drinking beer of any sort for some Protestants, and the adoption of the tea-drinking habit. Tea is now referred to as *utshwala bamakholwa*, i.e., the Christian's beer. They attempt to keep away from all pagan rituals such as *ukubuyisa*, i.e., the bringing back of the spirit of the dead man; pagan weddings, and for certain sects, the "washing of the hands" ceremony after a death, is taboo. It is also expected that the *amakholwa* will not fail in charity towards all people. These are the things which even the heathens will mention as characteristic of the Christian group.

The homes of Christians are, both in structure and character, modelled on western



standards. Kitchen economy also differs significantly from the traditional pattern, so much so, that the *amakhholwa* are often described as stingy people because they tend to conserve their food resources more than the *amabhinca*. They do not give beer parties except when they have some work to do, and even then, they "time" the work-party and insist that only those who worked will be rewarded with beer—a concept totally foreign to the traditionalists. As a result, men rarely congregate at a Christian home to talk over local politics or merely to spend the day and feel that life is worthwhile. For the Christian a man must always be at work (dignity of labour) while for the non-Christian, he likes to take time off, meet his fellows and be "just a human being" with a frothy pot of beer before them. The Christian homes are mostly square (*amahhisi*—from Afrikaans 'huis') or they are rondavels. They are furnished with chairs, tables, cupboards, kitchen dressers, and, among the Qadi, stoves (coal and Primus), radio sets, sofas, dining-room and bed-room suites are not uncommon. There are a few books in the homes, which include invariably, the Bible and a hymn book, and a few school books which are or were used by the children at school. There is also very commonly found a clock and some family pictures which are hung on the walls.

The food habits of the *amakhholwa* differ from those of the *amabhinca*. First, the three-meals-a-day routine is common in many homes. It is unusual to get a Christian home which does not serve a meal at lunch time. Breakfast is served early enough for the children to have had it before leaving for school—and that is between 7.30 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. Lunch is served between 1 and 2 p.m. and supper any time from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. They use more sugar, tea, fats, condensed milk and other tinned foods. Tea is always offered to a stranger as hospitality and people feel very uncomfortable and apologise profusely if they cannot show this hospitality. One Christian woman said to the writer:

"Please do not report me to *Msimbithi* for I have no tea-leaves and *Msimbithi* has just written an article in the *Ilanga lase Natal* about how stingy we Christians are" (*Msimbithi*, we may explain, was a newspaper columnist whose articles, which appeared regularly in the *Ilanga lase Natal*, were a humorous but much dreaded commentary on the social habits of Christians and educated Africans in general).

This leads us to another social characteristic of the Christians: their newspaper-mindedness and sensitivity to newspaper criticism of their social customs. It is difficult to meet any Christian in the whole of the Reserve, or any literate person, for that matter, who has not heard of *Msimbithi* and who does not use *Msimbithi's* phraseology to characterize modern behaviour patterns. The *Ilanga* among Protestants, and *Umafrika* among Catholics, are very widely read.

In general, then, among the Nyuswa and Qadi, Christians are marked by a progressive outlook, by a tremendous keenness on education, a definite West-oriented outlook, and a firmly held belief that a man must work. All this undergirds a firm commitment to the Christian religion as has been handed down to them by missionaries. As a result of this general outlook, the traditional institutions and behaviour patterns have been very greatly affected. Kinship solidarity which was the corner-stone of social organization has been very badly shaken. There is not, any more, the ready appeal to the kinship group in cases of sickness, quarrels or for mutual help in times of trouble. There have arisen or are emerging new, church-centred social groupings which are taking the place of the kinship group. These are provided by the Women's Union, the Mothers' Union, and by a recently formed *Zenzele Club*, which is the African version of the Y.W.C.A. Thus, when A had a quarrel with B (a case which would have gone to the Chief's Court or the *Umndeni* Court (Lineage Court) among the non-Christians), they referred their matter to the church leaders who settled it. Again, when



Mr. and Mrs. X quarrelled, over the alleged infidelity of the husband, the wife did not take the matter to the lineage court (*umndeni*), but appealed to the church councils. Similarly, when Mrs. C was sick, she asked for the priest to be called in to give her the last sacraments, and refused to consult an *isangoma* (diviner). Again, when the evangelist among the Nyuswa Lutherans was building a house, it was the church women and men who arranged a work party, supplied all the food and drinks which included beer and *amahewu* (a soft drink prepared from mealie porridge). When a Christian dies, it is the Christian group that handles the corpse, contributes money for burial expenses and food, and, what is of great importance, insists that as Christians they are not going to be cleansed for having handled the corpse! (Traditional custom demands that people's hands should be "washed with a goat" a week or so after the funeral, because they have defiled themselves by handling a dead body. Until such cleansing takes place, they are ritually unclean.)

We should not, however, leave you with the impression that the Christian way of life is marked only by cultural discontinuities. It is also characterized by many old culture patterns which are continued, in a truncated form, it is true, but are still recognizably the old traditional patterns. Such, for example, are behaviour patterns which accompany the whole of the marriage negotiations. There is the old *ukucela* (asking for the girl's hand in marriage) still accompanied by a cautious approach by the boy's people; the giving of the gifts (*izibizo* and *imibonda*), the usual reporting to the ancestral spirits implicit in the slaughter of the goats to receive the *umkhongi* (the go-between) and the beasts that are slaughtered on the wedding day are still the same and still perform the old functions. Obviously, the "reporting" aspect of the marriage negotiations is not seen by the Christians as incompatible with their Christian beliefs; and when I put the question to them, they looked at me

suspiciously and dismissed the whole thing politely with a gentle suggestion that I was being facetious. The *shela* (love-making) complex has altered slightly. The Christians do not court as openly as their non-Christian brothers, but *ubusoka* (the Don Juan outlook) although roundly condemned by Christians, still has much motivational force. The Christians have, in some sects (notably the Cushites) adopted the old method of having a senior girl to take charge of all the girls, supervise their love affairs, and inform the class-leader as soon as a girl falls in love. The boy is then interviewed by the girl's class-leader with a view to persuading him to join the church. The general view on the question of the *soma* custom which allowed unmarried couples to meet and have intercrural sex play, is that it is forbidden by the church. "But", said one man, "we have to be realistic and accept the fact that as we still live in a cultural environment which sanctions such practices, we Christians can do no more than pronounce against it". Another man, a minister of a separatist church, said that in his church, he had insisted on premarital chastity; but had forbidden any of his church members to *baneka* the young. The word *baneka* was significant, for it is used metaphorically to mean "lighting up" people in the dark, as does a flash of lightning, and thus catching them in their sins.

Christian life is also marked by many interesting adaptations—syncretistic tendencies, as we have called them. One of the most interesting of these is seen at Christmas time. To the Christians, of course, it is a holy day and they go to church and hold services. But one does not have, among African Christians, the 'holy-day' aspect of Christmas dominating the day as is the case, for example, among American Christians in New England. Christmas, among African Christians, is marked by a great festive air. It gives them a convenient excuse and opportunity to capitalize on the highly valued cultural norms of generosity and open-handedness. It is as if, after having



restrained themselves for the whole year in a desperate and soul-cramping effort at being frugal (a Christian teaching) a safety-valve were opened and all the pent-up urge to give exploded! Thus it is that on Christmas day, all kinds of foods are pressed on every caller. To excuse oneself on the grounds of satiety, i.e., *ukubonga*, is considered ill-mannered and could, in fact, be construed as an offence to the giver, because it carries with it the implication that you suspect the food to be poisoned. The right thing to do is to nibble at the food, and then to say: "Nobody can finish the food of a *mnumzane*" (head of a kraal), by which you mean: "Your generosity is boundless". A peculiar feature of Christmas is that whereas the most appreciated gifts are unsolicited, the Christmas spirit allows for the people to greet you with an invitation to give; and when so invited, you would have a strong streak of meanness in you if you did not give!

The syncretistic tendencies which have produced so many cultural hybrids are an interesting example of the African's genius in meeting new situations or in providing institutional machinery for new problems that arise in a rapidly changing cultural world.

They can be explained, I suggest, by a conceptual scheme borrowed from the practice of African medicine. There are two concepts in the armoury of Zulu practice of medicine: *ukucobeleva* and *ukuthaka* which become operative in this cultural hybridization. *Ukucobeleva* is to procure from a fellow practitioner some of his potent drugs, and you mix and blend (*thaka*) this with your own drug, and in the process give, not only the drug procured from outside, but also your own, greater potency.

Now, in the culture-contact situation, the African is impressed by the tremendous power of the White man; and he assumes, correctly, that the White man's power and phenomenal successes are all due to his cultural tools. Using

the concept of *ukucobeleva*, he tells himself that he must get some of these tools of the White man; but to make them formidable, they must be *thakwa'd* (mixed and blended) with his own cultural tools. The result of this blending is always a new cultural pattern which is neither European nor African but one which serves a purpose and meets the exigencies of the new social situation. These syncretistic movements which are found in every aspect of African life today, must be seen, therefore, not as dis-integrations or degeneracy, but rather as re-integrations!

While I am about syncretism, I might perhaps be allowed a little digression to suggest an answer to the accusations, often levelled at the Africans, that they are hastily casting away their old cultures and embracing a (foreign) European culture.

I suggest that the syncretistic tendencies belie such accusations. People very often forget that there is nothing morally or intellectually admirable about sticking to cultural institutions and behaviour patterns merely because they belong to a people's historic past even when such institutions and culture patterns fail to pass the test of modern conditions. One could sum up the matter very unkindly by saying, with Professor Whitehead, that the criticism is based on a belief which is "warped by the vicious assumption that each generation will live substantially amid conditions governing the lives of its fathers and will transmit those conditions to mould with equal force the lives of its children".<sup>1</sup>

#### (c) *The Amagxagxa*:

I come now to a third social group which is called the *amagxagxa*. It consists of that amorphous flotsam and jetsam of society which is neither Christian nor pagan in the sense of sharing the religious and cultural norms of either group. The *amagxagxa* are an in-between group about which one can make

<sup>1</sup>Whitehead, A. N. in "Introduction" to W. B. Donham's *Business Adrift*. (N.Y. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1931), pp. xviii-xix.

no predictions and about which there are no expectations with regard to its code of behaviour and social ethics. Interestingly enough, the word *igxagxa*, which is the singular form of *amagxagxa*, is used by Zulu speakers to designate a European 'hobo', about whom people have no reasonable expectations regarding his code of morals and behaviour.

It is very easy to mistake this group for Christians, because it has thrown away the outward appearances of traditionalism, but that is the only resemblance between it and the Christian group. As one non-Christian put it to me: "Whereas they dress like Christians, they go to beer drinks, take part in pagan rituals, eat the flesh of dead animals (as distinct from slaughtered ones), behave disgracefully, and in general, do all the things which the Christians do not do". Another old man, Hlengwa, a Christian, described the *amagxagxa* as: *amahule*, *abantu abangenamakhandi*, *kanti futhi abangenamakheli*, i.e. lawless people who have no heads or addresses. The phrase "with no addresses", does not mean that these people are vagrants. It means that ethically or normatively they cannot be placed. Another traditionalist, Gogoda Zama, described them as *amahumusha*, an old-fashioned word which means an untrustworthy person, or, in modern parlance, a *tsotsi*. Yet another traditionalist dismissed them contemptuously as *abantu abangazi lutho*, i.e., ignoramuses culturally and *abantu abangenamthetho*—people without law. Thus, the general feeling among the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribesmen is that the *amagxagxa* are the criminals of society.

They are the completely disorganized and dissociated persons who have broken away from traditionalism, but, unlike Christians, have not found any new integrative force and have not, therefore, developed a new consistent code of morals and new patterns of social

behaviour. Their morality is expediency and convenience. In Lippman's phrase, "having destroyed their gods, whirlwind became king"<sup>1</sup> in their lives, for the destruction of their old faiths removed the "still point", as T. S. Eliot<sup>2</sup> would put it, around which their universe revolved.

The *amagxagxa* group is the result of westernization by secular agencies as opposed to Westernization by Christian missionaries. Most of these people have acquired a smattering of Western civilization by working in towns or by working on European farms. Others have gone to school and acquired reading and writing skills; but they have not imbibed the value systems which are Western controls.

It is remarkable that the acquisition of what Linton<sup>3</sup> calls "instrumental values" has a tendency to undermine conceptual values; which form the "underpinning" of a people's whole life. This is exactly what has happened with the *amagxagxa*. They have thrown away traditional ways but have not put anything in their stead. As a result, they are contemptuous of all standards of morality, treat with disrespect the chief and all he represents, while adopting a sneering attitude towards Christian institutions and practices. They affect smart city manners, and pretend not to understand the rustic ways of the Reserve people. Two instances will illustrate what we mean. A young woman who might have been a Christian by outward appearances, was at the Health Centre the other day with head wounds. I was interested and asked her how she had got them. Her answer was: "We fight in our part of the country". On being questioned further, she explained that she was fighting with another woman, her sister-in-law, because they had called each other prostitutes. Her sister-in-law, she informed me, was bringing too many men into the home, and when she objected, it was pointed out that

<sup>1</sup>Lippman, W., *Preface to Morals*.

<sup>2</sup>Eliot, T. S., "Triumphal March".

<sup>3</sup>Linton, R., "The Problem of Universal Values", in *Method and Perspective in Anthropology* (ed. Robert F. Spencer), Minnesota Press, 1954, (pp. 145-168).



she also, had her lovers. A fight ensued, the result of which was a wound on her head. On being questioned as to what church she went to, she said: "Oh, neither of us belong to the church".

I submit that in both the Christian and the non-Christian, i.e., traditional groups, such a thing could not have taken place. There is, at any rate, strong moral condemnation of women who fight in both these groups. Another interesting example of the typically *igxagxa* attitude came to my notice when a young man, again well dressed, came to a group of people where there was the local *induna*. He spoke glibly about Zulu customs which he did not understand, and when the *induna* suggested that Zulu custom demanded that he should marry the girl who was nursing his child, he flew into a rage and told the *induna* that he would 'club' anybody who came to talk 'native' nonsense to him. He was not used to these Native customs, he said, as he lived in town. The men listened to him silently and remarked, after he had left, that he behaved like a typical *ibhusumane*, a derogatory word used to describe a Coloured person.

There are more *amagxagxa* among the Nyuswa than there are among the Qadi tribe. This is explained by the fact that whereas there has been a concentration of missionary work among the Qadi, it has been at a minimum among the Nyuswa. Not only are the Catholics active among the Qadi, but the Qadi chief, Mandlakayise Ngcobo, gave his blessing to the activities of the Methodist African preachers whom he encouraged and assisted in building a church which he said was to be for his tribesmen. This meant that the Qadi tribesmen could be Christian and still be acceptable to their chief. Incidentally, Mandlakayise had already assisted the American Board Missionaries at Inanda to build a church.

### *Is the Nyuswa Reserve typical of the Native Reserves in other parts of the Country?*

The question may legitimately be asked as to the extent to which the Nyuswa Reserve is typical of the reserves throughout the Union of South Africa, or, at any rate, of the reserves in Natal.

I propose to answer the question after the fashion of Dr. Oeser and Dr. Emery<sup>1</sup> by considering—

- (a) whether there is as much, or more or less culture change taking place in other reserves;
- (b) whether the agents of change are the same throughout South Africa and whether there are no self-contained, contact-free areas which have not been influenced by Western civilization;
- (c) whether the results of culture contact are the same in other areas as they are among the Nyuswa and the Qadi tribes, and finally,
- (d) whether the social classes as have been described for the Nyuswa reserve do not appear in different forms and/or proportions as a function of the concentration and intensity of the activities of the agents and the length of time during which they have been operating in different reserves.

To the first question about the occurrence of culture change in other reserves in South Africa, it is possible to return a positive reply. This is based on my fairly intimate knowledge of life in the reserves of Natal and Zululand. I am, in fact, of opinion that the Nyuswa reserve is among the more conservative and least Christianized areas; and that the tempo of change is not nearly as fast or as advanced as it is in other areas, particularly the mission reserves.

Studies<sup>2</sup> that have been made in the reserves show that throughout South Africa, the agents

<sup>1</sup>Oeser, O. A. and Emery, F. E., *Social Structure and Personality in a Rural Community* (Routledge, and Kegan Paul, 1954, pp. 222-7).

<sup>2</sup>e.g. M. Hunter's *Reaction to Conquest*; Ashton, *The Basuto*; H. Kuper's *Uniform of Colour*; Krige and Krige, *Realm of the Rain Queen*.

of change are missionary Christian work and secular agents like commerce and industry and living on European farms. In South Africa it would be very difficult if not impossible, to find an area which was self-contained and untouched by Western influences.

In this paper, I have attempted to suggest explicitly and implicitly that the different types of agents at work in the reserves can be associated with specific types of end-products, and that the Africans who live on the reserve do not belong to the same class and cannot be treated as if they were a culturally homogeneous group. Thus I have suggested that the missionaries have produced Christian personalities and communities which are marked by specific cultural discontinuities from the traditional Africans who are the products of slow evolutionary changes. The Christians are progressive, West-oriented and their lives are supported by Christian principles. On the other hand, the end products of secular agents, i.e., of industry and commerce and migratory labour, are disorganized and dissociated persons (culturally). They are the *amagxagxa* who, like Bunyan's Christian, are wallowing in a confused cultural slough of despond. They have no set

standards of behaviour, have not achieved any integration and their morality is convenience and/or expediency. It is important to note that these are not disillusioned Christians who have tried Christianity and found it wanting. Nor are they the counterpart of the European materialist whose intellectual rejection of Christianity has led him to a materialist philosophy. They are no more than pagans who have merely acquired the outward trappings of Western civilisation but have missed the values inherent in the Western way of life. These are the people on whom generalizations about African Christians and educated persons are based.

Finally, there are the die-hards who resist change and stick tenaciously to their traditional culture. These are the people whom I have called the traditionalists.

One should make the important qualification, that in the reserves on which missionaries have been active for a long time, like the Inanda and Groutville Mission Reserves, the descending order of magnitude of these groups will be as follows: Christians, *amagxagxa* and the traditionalists. This, it will be seen, is the reverse of the Nyuswa situation.

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# NOTES ON THE IMPERATIVE IN ZULU

J. A. ENGELBRECHT\*

## SYNOPSIS

*The main theme of this study is the part played by raised pitch in determining the Imperative relative to some other form, and in imparting to other moods and tenses a function which is similar or related to that of the Imperative. Thus it is that when the tones of the natural or pre-emphatic Imperative are compared with those of the verb stem in the Infinitive it would seem as if the distinction merely lies in a higher tone level for the former. A similar distinction marks the relation of plural to singular in the Imperative itself. When the Imperative is enunciated with non-characteristic emphasis, this means that the emotional factor has broken free from the morphological, which normally controls it, and the instability resulting therefrom is reflected in an indefinable and unpredictable number of tone levels in excess of the natural, any one of which the speaker may use to match his mood or the depth of his emotion. There is, however, another and much less used form of the Imperative where emphasis is characteristic, and it may be presumed that here the morphological factor once more comes into its own. Certain tenses of the Indicative and the Subjunctive can in a like manner be converted into forms expressing a command or near command. It would further appear that when the pitch of the Imperative is raised, certain words and formatives immediately following it act in sympathy; here, however, more information is needed to determine to what extent this takes place.*

In discussing the Zulu Imperative it is necessary first of all to set out the component or integrating elements through which it acquires its identity. These are:

- (i) the phonetical form through which the function of the Imperative as a command is realised, and
- (ii) the prosodic elements of length and tone by means of which the Imperative can also become emphatically conditioned.

### A. FORMS WHICH EXPRESS IMPERATIVES ONLY (MORPHOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES).

#### (1) *The Natural or Pre-emphatic Form.*

The circumstance that the Imperative as absolute command is realised without formal indication of the person addressed, in other words, that the verb stem, or whatever takes its place, does not undergo inflection for the singular, applies to Bantu languages in general. For the purposes of this study it is of even greater

importance to reflect that in converting the verb stem into a word its tonal constituent acquires morphological value, yet inasmuch as the Imperative is by nature exclamatory or interjective, this tonal constituent also has emotional significance. Looking at this from another angle we could say that emotional tone as the free agent on being put in harness and hitched on to the vehicle called "Word" loses its extravagance, becomes "word conscious", and in so doing allows itself to be steered along a circumscribed course<sup>1</sup>. But for this there would be no point in differentiating between this natural Imperative and the same form expressed with emphasis. For the latter, as we shall see, the condition is forceful expression which shows itself by an increase in tone and in vowel quantity.

When it is some specific case of increase we wish to look into, statements to the effect that the introduction of the emotional factor causes a lifting of the tone are naturally of little value unless it can be shown that the emotionally

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<sup>1</sup>The fact that the Imperative also qualifies as the equivalent of a sentence cannot be discussed here.

determined form has a corresponding non-emotional or other form to which it can be related. For the Imperative this would appear to be the verb stem as such, yet this is not a free form. We could pursue our analysis even further and say that, valued in terms of its radical or basic tones, it is also a construed form. It is precisely here that we may come face to face with a puzzling situation in that a Zulu informant will assume the verb stem as the basic form, and, what matters even more, pronounce it with the tones which he thinks must apply. We dismiss this as proof of an all too lively imagination, only to find that even after a long lapse of time he repeats these stems with either no marked tonal inconsistency or with none at all.

It was partly to seek a way out of this dilemma that we started making comparisons with the object of ascertaining whether the tones of the afore-mentioned verb stems possibly recurred elsewhere or in other connections; and it was then found that as Infinitives these stems had the same tones. It seems more than likely, therefore, that our problematical verb stems are nothing more nor less than shortened Infinitives, and for convenience sake here they will be so named. There now remained the task if possible of linking up the shortened Infinitive with the Imperative. If the methodically conceived tone sequence existing between these two is sufficient evidence of their close relationship, then such a relationship there is.

In section (a) of the table below we give a selection of shortened Infinitives (X), and in the column opposite (Y) the natural Imperatives supposedly derived from them; in (b) are shown instances of Imperatives realised from known free forms<sup>1</sup>.

(X)	(Y)	
	(i)	(ii)
(a) <i>hambà</i> go, travel	<i>há:mbà</i> pl. <i>hambá:nì</i>	
<i>sindá</i> smear	<i>sí:ndá</i> pl. <i>sindá:nì</i>	
<i>sindà</i> recuperate	<i>sí:ndà</i> pl. <i>sindá:nì</i>	
<i>sondelà</i> approach	<i>sondé:là</i> pl. <i>sondelá:nì</i>	

(b) <i>kàhlé</i> adv. well,	<i>ka:hlé</i> pl. <i>kahlé:nì</i> wait!
carefully, etc.	be careful!
<i>miná</i> abs. pron.	<i>minà</i> pl. <i>miná:nì</i> look
1st p.s. emphatic	here! give
<i>wòzà</i> 2nd p.s. fu-	attention!
ture tense, Indic.	<i>wò-zà</i> pl. <i>wozá:nì</i> come!
(contracted).	

Owing to the limitations imposed by the transcription the tonal sequence referred to above cannot be fully shown; thus, for example, in Y(i) the syllables *si-* of *sinda* (smear!) and *-hle* of *kahle* were slightly higher intoned than the corresponding syllables in X. The change over from one form to another, viz., from X to Y(i), or Y(i) to Y(ii) is in fact achieved by a change in tone level; this need not, and does not imply that the relevant increase in tone is at all proportionate for all the syllables concerned. Final syllables especially appear to be but lightly affected; this feature has some connection with the previous syllable or penultimate which, by reason of a marked increase both in length and pitch (and/or, as some would say, by virtue of its carrying stress or main stress) acquires a certain preponderance over all others. This preponderance will become even more marked as we proceed from natural to emphatically conditioned Imperatives.

In forming the plural of the Imperative a large number of Bantu languages make use of a post-formative, often *-i* or *-ni*. In Zulu it appears as *-ni*, or, in stating the Precisive form, as *-nini* (hence *hambanini*, *kahlenini*, etc.), and it is integrated with the verb stem as would a verbal suffix. For the rest, and like the concord of the 2nd person plural, with which it is phonetically identical, it refers to number—this being only one of the functions of personal and class concords. Its function to indicate number is no less in evidence where, in cohortatives, it collaborates with the concord of the 1st person plural to express the equivalent of an inclusive plural:

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of uniformity all examples used in this article follow the tones of one individual only who was at the same time the most outstanding. The transcription, which is not tonemic, provides for the following: extra high tone (ˊ), high tone (ˋ), high falling tone (ˋˊ), medium high tone (unmarked), medium low tone and low tone (ˋˋ).



*asihambe* (let us go), but  
*asihambeni* (let us, you and me, go); Pre-  
 cisive form  
*asihambenini* (let us, you and me, be  
 away).

The origin of postformatives *-ni* and *-nini* presents another problem. When we proceed from the supposition that in addressing a plurality of persons the converted verb stem or Imperative requires an explanatory adjunct or expletive, it appears only natural to associate *-ni* with the absolute pronoun of the 2nd person plural, of which *ni-* would then be the basic or short form, hence *hamba ni(na) > hamba ni > hambani*. By taking the end product and proceeding in the same way as before we arrive at the Precisive form, thus *hambani ni(na) > hambani ni > hambanini*. Alternative suggestions are that *-nini* is either (i) a reduplication of the basic, or (ii) an assimilation from the full form. So far all suggestions have in common that they assume that the post-formative, whether as *-ni* or *-nini*, has its roots in the absolute pronoun. In a subsequent article the whole matter will be gone into more fully and the use of the term precisive will then also be explained. Exponents of yet another view which identifies post-formative *-ni* with the concord of the 2nd person plural have the somewhat difficult task of showing how it happens that a concordial formative, for which the prefixal position is the normal one, here behaves in a different way.

## (2) *The Imperative with non-characteristic Emphasis.*

In the previous section we tried to explain that in the tonal constituent of the Imperative there are morphological and emotional factors, and it was implied rather than stated that the morphological, in taking precedence over the emotional, is also instrumental in its fixation. We further said that because of this we are enabled to differentiate between natural Imperatives and Imperatives expressed with emphasis. We can now amplify this statement by saying

that when this emphasis is non-characteristic, the influence of the morphological as a controlling factor no longer operates, hence the incidence of tone (as also of length) becomes unpredictable, arbitrary or even capricious. Here we have to remind ourselves that in using emphasis the tone level changes, and that as the degree of emphasis is in a general way commensurate with the pitch, there can be an untold range or succession of such tone levels. Except for this restriction there is complete freedom in determining the pitch, nor is the speaker tied down by regulated intervals in moving from one pitch to the next. In the case of the second last syllable there appears to be greater consistency in the manner in which the features of length and tone progress through these different levels, and this will be the case irrespective of whether other syllables move along at a corresponding rate or not. Tenseness of the organs and musculature is apparently always present although this too may vary in degree. Loudness in the popular sense, and not as an alternative to stress, is not necessarily an accompanying feature, and a Zulu may be observed to express even supreme excitement or anger in a voice so perfectly controlled that, but for its high pitch, it may almost sink down to a whisper.

We shall from now on omit all reference to those syllables which, possibly because they are dwarfed by the penultimate, generally fail to register the impact of emphasis to the full. We are then left with the penultimate itself which conforms to a general pattern showing that when emphasis is increased there is a corresponding augmentation of tone coupled with progressive lengthening of the vowel. At the end of the series this syllable appears with high falling tone and with its vowel stretched to the utmost.<sup>1</sup> In trying to show this we shall, as hitherto, represent the natural Imperative by Y, and the same when accompanied by emphasis by Z. With the figures 1, 2 and 3 successive tone levels will be indicated.

<sup>1</sup>The circumstances that extreme emphasis also produces a sustained consonant (thus *wo::zza*, *wozani::nni*, etc.) is here left out of account.

X	Y	Z1	Z2	Z3
wòzà	wo·zà	wó:za	wō:za	wô::za
(you will come)	wòzà:nì	wozà:nì	wozā:nì	wozâ:nì
	wòzàní:nì	wozaní:nì, etc.		

Needless to say no schematic representation can satisfactorily account for the gradations of tone and length; it can at best only show moments within the series. Even so, such a representation is misleading in that these moments cannot be held to refer to strictly defined values either of quantity or pitch; nor, for that matter, is it implied that a certain pitch synchronises with length of this or that compass. Its main value, therefore, lies in its ability to show the general trend, and as long as this is kept in mind there can be no harm in using the above-mentioned symbols in the way we do.

### (3) *The Imperative with characteristic Emphasis.*

Another quite distinct form of the Imperative employs a preformative which can be the objectival concord, singular or plural, of either the 1st or the 3rd person, or else the reflexive prefix. As in A(1) the verb stem shows the suffixal termination or morpheme *-a*. Wanger (*Konversations-Grammatik der Zulu-Sprache*, p. 388) gives a few examples all of which show the singular objectival concord of the 3rd person only. It is his opinion that this Imperative is not used in Natal, and that in Zululand it is usually replaced by a milder form with termination *-e*. My own information suggests that it is/was known to both areas, but as it is signalled with emphasis, the situations in which it is employed are limited. The implications of this Imperative seem to be urgency coupled with inevitability; it can therefore be used under pressure or pressing circumstances; when a previous polite request did not have the desired effect, etc., but always, we are told, there will be either some definite expectation or the assurance that the command will be complied with.

The following extract provides a solitary or else very rare instance of the appearance of the Emphatic Imperative in Zulu literature. It is taken from Fuze (*Abantu abamnyama lapa bavela kona*, 1922, p. 10), and it depicts a situation like

that just referred to in a most illuminating manner:

*Kutiwa kwakuti nonxa innngane is'ikala, ifuna ukugoduka, iti "Nginika ingubo yami leyo, Siququmadevu", sipendule siti "Woza lapa uzo-yitata".* (It is said that it happened that even when the child was already crying because it wanted to go home, and it said: "Siququmadevu, there now give that blanket of mine", that it answered saying: "Come here and take it").

The special circumstances in which the Emphatic Imperative is used accounts only in part for its absence from written literature. Another contributing factor could possibly be failure on the part of revisers either to appreciate the form itself, or the author's purpose in using it.

Further examples:

*ngicashisa kulomuntu!!* (hide me from this man!)

*yiletha leyonduku!!* (there now, bring that stick!)

*zikholisani!!* (enjoy yourselves which up to now you have not been doing!).

The strongest possible emphatic form is attained when the Precisive is used as Z3, that is to say, when supreme emotional tension is likely to explode into uncontrolled anger, violence, etc.:

*basizanini!!* (and now you help them, or . . . !)

*ziqaphelanini!!* (you just watch your step, or . . . !).

As the function of the enclitic *-bo* is merely that of making a command curt or brusque, it can be added to every manner of Imperative, and so also to the type of negative which is here preferred by some:

*ungaze wamsiza!!* (do not help him!)

*ungaze wayiletha-bo!!* (don't you bring it!).

Owing to insufficient data no positive answer can be given as to whether the Emphatic Imperative is also used in other areas where Zulu or some closely allied form is spoken. It is not mentioned by O'Neil (*Sindebele Grammar*), while the many printing errors occurring in Weale



(*Matabele and Makalaka Vocabulary*, 1893), places the only example which he gives, namely *ngilahlela* for *ngihlalela* (wait for me), in doubt. In unpublished data collected by Ziervogel on Ndebele of the Northern Transvaal, mention is made of an Imperative which only takes the concord of the 1st person singular:

*mpha!* (give me!) *nthandani!* (love me!).

It is possible that these and similar forms owe their existence to influence from a language or languages of the Sotho-Tswana group, cf. Cole (*Tswana Grammar*, 1955, p. 24): "Typically there is no change of vowel when the 1st person singular is used with imperatives". Examples given include *mpha!* (give me!), *nthusa!* (help me!).

#### B. OTHER MOODS AND TENSES USED AS A COMMAND OR NEAR COMMAND (INDIRECT IMPERATIVES)

Further instances to be considered are where certain tenses acquire the quality or the function of a command; these are primarily the Present and the Future tenses of the Indicative and of the Subjunctive. The investigation, as far as it went, shows that differentiation between these tenses when used in the ordinary way or as commands is achieved by prosodic means which attain their greatest prominence on the penultimate syllable.

##### (1) *Indicative*

Of the two forms used for the Present Indicative, namely the Definite or Long form, and the Indefinite or Short form, only the first can carry emphasis; with the latter the emphasis rests on an accompanying adjunct or enlargement:<sup>1</sup>

*uyahamba* (Z) *manje*, *akufanele uhlale lapha* ((you) go now, you ought not to stay here); but

*uhlamba izitsha* (Z), *awenzi* (Z) *okunye* ((you) wash the dishes, (you) do nothing else).

*Note:* Ziervogel (*The Eastern Sotho*, pp. 60n., 68 and 102) has a form for *Pai* which to all appearances is the same. An extract from a text to which we append the author's own translation (pp. 90-91), but with our own italics, reads as follows:

*u-m-aklalela* . . . *vyiseme*; *u-pfuha* *xušeni we-xa mati*; *u-te-vilavisa a-hlapa munna wa-xo*; *u-releha* . . . *vuušwa munna wa-xo*; *u-tzeva vušuxwa* . . . (spread mats for him; get up early in the morning and draw water; you must boil it that it washes your husband; you must cook porridge for your husband, you must make light beer . . .);

*uzophendula* (Z) *imišuzo leyo anduba uhambe* (you shall answer those questions before you go).

##### (2) *Subjunctive*.

In the foregoing pages only casual mention was made of what is sometimes referred to as the mild Imperative in *-e*. Actually it is a Subjunctival form, for it has the same tones as the Subjunctive; like the latter it can also be used in consecutive verb construction. It may, therefore, with good reason be looked upon as a Subjunctive without a subjectival concord.

The subtle differences between the Imperative as a command and the above-mentioned as request, entreaty, etc., express themselves very clearly also when emphasis becomes progressively applied. Expert Zulu speakers are fully conscious of these differences: they point out that however closely emphasis can bring the Subjunctival form to the province of the morphological Imperative there can be no overlapping. It is thus that an informant on occasion remarked that *ngisize* with strong emphasis (approximately Z3) is hardly distinguishable from *ngisiza* with weak emphasis (approximately Z1), "but it is still somewhat polite".

<sup>1</sup>This was first noticed in Xhosa; see the writings of authors like McLaren and Bennie. For Zulu see the more detailed account of v.d. Westhuizen ("Die Kort en Lang Teenwoordige Tydvorms in Zoeloe", (unpublished thesis), University of Stellenbosch, 1949).

It being then understood that Subjunctival forms can in a like manner as true Imperatives be expressed with emphasis<sup>1</sup>, it also follows that the Precise form here emerges as the supremely strong one:

*msize!!* (Z) (do now hélp him!)

*zikholiseni!!* (Z) (do now enjôy yourselves!); but

*ngiphenini!!* (Z) (here now, gíve me!; . . . and therefore now gíve me (Consecutive).)

### *The Imperative with a Qualification*

The question of how natural or else emphatically conditioned Imperatives affect the tones of succeeding words or formatives merits a fuller investigation than that given here. That words and formatives become so influenced became apparent when Imperatives were tried out with the following: (i) enclitics *-ke* and *-bo*, (ii) adverbs of emotional content like *phela* and *belu*, and (iii) absolute pronouns. With Imperative Y the enclitics named have relatively low tone, with Z in all its degrees the tone accommodates itself to the new level. The same happens with *phela* and *belu* where, in natural expression, the first syllables have medium tone. Imperative Y requires the non-emphatic, Imperative Z an emphatic alternative of the absolute pronoun; this means that the basically low tone of the latter's first syllable becomes lifted. On the

other hand the already somewhat high-pitched *-na* of this pronoun does not undergo any readily appreciable change except where strong emphasis is applied.

Difference in tone at the same time expresses the difference between (a) a good-natured, half-hearted, irresolute, and (b) a stern or peremptory (and therefore emphatic) command, request, injunction, etc. In the examples used here to illustrate this, tone and length will as before only be indicated with Y-forms.

(a) Good-natured, etc. (Y):

*há:mbà-ké!* (just go!)

*há:mbà-bò!* (go then—don't wait!)

*há:mbà phelà* (indeed go!)

*ngisi:zé-kè* (just help me; . . . and therefore just help me).

(b) Peremptory, etc. (Z):

*hamba-ke!!* (go then—what are you waiting for?)

*hamba-bo!!* (go)

*hamba-ke-bo!!* (away with you!)

*hambani nina!!* (get you gone!)

*ngiyeka-bo!!* (leave me alone!).

Similar differences become apparent when the auxiliary *-bo* is used in a half-hearted, and then again in a stern command. In the former case *-bo-* is distinctly low toned, e.g., *ubòhámà* (you must just go), negative *ungabòhámà*; in the alternative case *-bo-* accommodates itself to the higher level.

<sup>1</sup>The Future Tense of the Subjunctive is recognised by Doke (see his *Text-book of Zulu Grammar*) as emphatic. The various forms which it assumes are governed by laws of assimilation which, by reason of their wider application, are given in that context, yet without considering all aspects. Here we are more especially concerned with the phenomenon that under certain conditions the vowel *e* (by which is meant the open mid-forward vowel),

(i) when immediately followed by the high-back vowel *u* becomes the corresponding close mid-forward vowel *e*, or else merges with *u* to form the mixed vowel *o*;

(ii) when followed by *u* in the following syllable either becomes the close vowel *e*, or, by accommodating itself still further to the labial vowel, changes into the close mid-back vowel *o*; further

(iii) when an intervening consonant, namely *k* or *l*, disappears, the vowels *e* and *u* once more occur in juxtaposition resulting in a repetition of (i).

*seufikile* (i) (you have now arrived) > *sofikile* (i), alternatively *sewufikile* or *sowufikile* (ii)

*sekuyisikhathi* (ii) (it is now the time) > *sokuyisikhathi* (ii)

*elukhambeni* (ii) (at, etc., the clay pot) > *olukhambeni* (ii) or *okhambeni* (iii).

With accompanying palatalisation:

*etshwaleni* (at, etc., the beer < \**ebu-aleni*) > *otshwaleni* (< \**ebu-aleni*) or, by repeating the prefix, *ebu-tshwaleni*

So also:

*ningabe* (u) *kubulala* (you must not kill) > *ningabokubulala* (i) or (ii) or *ningabobulala* (iii)

Applying these laws of assimilation to the Future Subjunctive we may for instance meet with any of the following:

*uye* (u) *kuthatha* (as in: *hamba uye* (u) *kuthatha*, go and take) or *uyeuthatha* or *uyokuthatha* or *uyothatha*, etc.



## THE BALI OF BAMENDA<sup>1</sup>

M. D. W. JEFFREYS\*

### SYNOPSIS

*In the Bamenda Province, British Cameroons, is a group of people called the Bali. They are a Chamba group from the north and are recent arrivals. This paper presents the history of their southwards migration and shows them to be the descendants of a defeated mercenary army of the Fulani.*

In the Bamenda province of the British Cameroons are settlements known collectively as the Bali, though originally the name appears to have been Bani and to have been corrupted to Bali by the Germans. These people are of Chamba stock and exist to-day as five separate groups known respectively as Bali Nyonga, Bali Bagham, Bali Kumbat, Bali Gasho and Bali Gansin.

Ndimbia, in his oral account to me of the history of the Wiya people, throws a sidelight on the origin of the Bali. He stated: "The Bara<sup>2</sup> employed native armies and it depended on the place whence the raid originated what native army was employed".

The story of the Bali arrival in Bamenda varies with the narrator. The earliest is that given in Njoya's history of the Bamum people<sup>3</sup>.

This history, compiled about the end of the last century, records how the Bamum had been defeated in a Fulani raid from Banyo. On recovering from this disaster the Bamum dug a fosse and built a vallum round their city of Fumban and then posted a mobile army outside these defences. When the Banyo Fulani with their Chamba mercenaries again raided Fumban, these attackers were signally defeated by the Bamum under the leadership of King Mbwombwo. The Bamum following up their

victory, not only routed the Fulani but cut off the retreat of their Chamba mercenaries, so that some of them fled south west to settle on the mountain top where Balikumbat now is. Other Chamba fled to a place, Kupara, on the upper marshes of the river Nun, but still being near Fumban they were a perpetual menace. So Mbwombwo drove them from Kupara. From this dispersion the settlement of Bali Nyonga in Bamenda was founded. The old chief of Bali Nyonga who died a few years ago was named Mbwombwo after the Bamum king. This naming came about because his father wished to commemorate a friendly encounter he once had with the latter. While the Chamba were at Kupara they helped the Bamum, their former enemies, in a local raid. An only son of one of the Chamba chief's wives was very valiant in attack and his conduct was brought to King Mbwombwo's notice who then sent for the young man and, giving him presents of cloth, matchets, etc., told him to take no further part in these raids because, he being an only son, if he were killed the Chamba chieftainship might lapse or die out<sup>4</sup>. Not long afterwards the Chamba chief died and of the many claimants to the throne it was this only son that was chosen. He was so surprised that King Mbwombwo should have known beforehand who was to be

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<sup>1</sup>These notes were collected between July, 1936 and December, 1945, while I was in charge of the Bamenda division of the British Cameroons, now a province. The preparation, compilation and typing of this piece of research was defrayed by a grant from the National Council of Social Research for which I am very grateful.

<sup>2</sup>This name is widespread in West Africa as a name for the raiding Fulani.

<sup>3</sup>Unpublished Ms., Chapter II, *Njoya's History and Customs of the Bamum*.

<sup>4</sup>This warning has reference to the Bamum custom that the king's wife with an only son is the mother of the heir, and it appears that the Chamba copied this custom.

the next Chamba chief that after becoming chief of the local Chamba he named his first son, Mbwombwo, in memory of the Bamum king. It was this Chamba Mbwombwo who was the late Bali Nyonga chief. So much then for the Bamum account.

### *Balikumbat*

Gulabi the present village head or *fon*, of Balikumbat, with his village elders gave me the following information. They claim to have come from a place called Nyihe in Chamba. Their list of chiefs is:

- |              |                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) Gawulubi | (5) Galabi                            |
| (2) Galabi   | (6) Gogwani                           |
| (3) Gagbeni  | (7) Gaiyumbe                          |
| (4) Gayamge  | (8) Galabi, the present village head. |

"Gawulubi led the Bali from Chamba. He first went to Bamum, then to Sengi, then to Bakum alias Bagham where he died. It was here that the Bali broke up. Galabi, a son of Gawulubi, led one group from which we are descended.

"Galabi led our branch of the Bali from Bakum to our present site of Balikumbat, which means Bali in the mountains. When we arrived here we found this place already occupied by people whom we called Nkunpit. He attacked them and dispersed them. Some of them took refuge among the Bamum, others founded the present settlement of Bamum-kumbat or Bamum in the mountains.

"Galabi conquered the following local towns so that he could enslave them and rule them, namely Bambwi, Bambili, Babaju near Bambue, Bafanji and Bamali.

"In his time the Fulani raided this part of the world. Making their camp at Putsela on the

high ground between Balikumbat and Bamali, they raided Bamali, Bamessi and Baba. They attacked us but failed to dislodge us from our mountain fastness. The Fulani then returned the way they came. Galabi died and is buried here.

"Gagbeni, our next chief, raided Dangabi (alias Bali Bagham). The fighting started as follows. Galabi, the chief of Bali Bagham attacked us. We captured him and a number of his people and held them as slaves for a few months and then let them go. Gagbeni then attacked Bambalan, Babungo, Bamessi, Bangola, Bafreng and led two raids on Bali Nyonga. The first Bali Nyonga war arose from Banmi, the wife of the Balikumbat chief, running away with her child, Nako, to the Bali Nyonga chief, Galenga (Galega?), who refused to return them. He said they must be redeemed. When the redemption goods for her and her child were handed over he kept them also. So Gagbeni attacked Galenga, burnt down the town and captured Galenga who, however, escaped and rallying his forces, attacked us but was driven off. In the second war on Bali Nyonga, Gagbeni was slain. In this second attack on Bali Nyonga we were driven back and forced to retire through the Bafreng people who hated us. They seized Gagbeni and handed him over to Bali Nyonga who then took him to their town and there killed him.

"Gayamge then became chief and raided the following peoples, Bagangu, Bamum, Baba (near Babungo), Babungo, Bangola twice, Bambalang. The Babungo chief was captured and was redeemed by his people paying cowries and Bikom cloths for him<sup>1</sup>. When Gayamge died he was followed by Galabi who

<sup>1</sup>Confirmation of this Balikumbat raid comes from the village of Bamunka. This account was given me by Nyu Nkuo of Bamunka. "Under our chief, Megbafono, we rescued many of the Babungo from the Balikumbat who had raided them. The Babungo chief was at that time living at Ngemsibu and the Balikumbats raided, capturing many of his people. We intercepted the returning raiders who released a large number of the Babungo. This rescue occurred when the Baba made an alliance with the Balikumbat to raid the Babungo. When the Baba men were heavily engaged with the Babungo the Balikumbats looted Baba town. They took away everything, women, children, goats. When the Baba men returned they found their town ruined so they followed their wives to Balikumbat. When later on the Baba left Balikumbat and settled on our land, Balikumbat sent word to us to drive away the Baba. We refused and war broke out between us and Baba on one side and Balikumbat on the other. The fighting was indecisive. Men were killed on both sides."



raided Bafreng, Bamunka<sup>1</sup>, Bamum twice. Babanki<sup>2</sup> at first paid tribute to us but later revolted and we raided them.

"Gagwani then followed as chief when Galabi died. The Germans arrived in his day and there were no more raids. When he died he was succeeded by Gaiyamyé who lived peaceably and when he died, I, the present Galabi, became chief.

"There is no tradition among us that we have ever raided the Nsungli people. If they say that we did then they must have confused us with the Bamum.

"Bali Baku is only a settlement of Bali Nyonga. While we were at Bakum, these now, five, distinct chieftainships were all united under one chief, Gawalubi. On his death, quarrels arose over his successor with the result that each of Gawalubi's sons broke away with his own following."

At present these five independent Bali towns are divided between two native court areas. Thus Balikumbat, Baliganshi and Baligasú attend the Ndop native court, while Balibaghām and Bali-nyonga both attend the Bali native court.

The Temples (1922, 82), report that in northern Nigeria: "When a Chamba chief dies the fact is made known to the elders, but to them alone. They announce to the people that he is unwell. When the body is cold they select a member of the royal family to be his successor and bring him to the dead man's house. In complete silence one of their number moves the body three times in a final effort to rouse it, after which it is buried inside the house or compound. In the latter case a hut is built over it."

Galabi, the *Fon* of Balikumbat, gave me the following information about the succession in his area. The successor to a chief is chosen by the reigning chief telling a few of his councillors which of his sons is to succeed him. When these

councillors inform the heir-designate, he is not scourged as is the practice with many other tribes, for instance, as in the case of the chief of Bande. The new chief is washed and then his whole body is anointed with groundnut oil. Camwood is not used. He is then robed in a white gown and wears a red cap with flaps hanging down over the ears. Formerly these items were made by members of the tribe; now they are just bought.

A bracelet made of *kumia*, a native twine, is tied round his left wrist and he is now placed on and taken off the old stool of chieftainship thrice. Before commencing this ceremony the old sacred spear, the *dinsho*, is driven upright into the ground. The present *dinsho* was claimed to be the one held by Gawulubi at Bakum and though the other Bali chiefs have their own *dinsho*, they are imitations of this one, the real one. However, after a long discussion it was agreed that no one knew where Gawulubi's spear, the true spear, was.

When this ceremony is over the new chief takes this spear in his hand and goes to the local market where all may see him. This spear accompanied them from the time they left Chamba and it is used in the annual sacrifices<sup>3</sup>. The chief wears his white gown for two weeks and then gives it to a blacksmith who then presents the chief with a bundle of seven spears, *dinbui*. When the chief dies, one of these *dinbui* is broken up and thrown away. The other six are distributed among the elders. Each chief gets his own set of seven *dinbui*. The chiefs die naturally, they are not put away at the end of seven years, as one might expect from the number of the spears given to him.

The Balikumbat *fon* remarked however: "We have heard that among the Bamum when a new chief is installed, a human image in salt is also made and this image is the salt supply of the Fumban chief. When he has consumed it all

<sup>1</sup>The Bamunka chief confirms that there was fighting between them and the Balikumbat.

<sup>2</sup>The old village head of Babanki (alias Kijom Kitingo) said that under their chief, Ase, they were attacked by the Balikumbats of whom they slew 350 while losing only 20 men themselves. The war started by Ase refusing to send his daughter as a wife to the Balikumbat chief who then said he would come and get her by force. After that war the Balikumbat left them alone.

<sup>3</sup>It is most unlikely that this spear came from Chamba and accompanied these people in their wanderings.

he is killed"<sup>1</sup>. The Balikumbat chief continued:

"The skulls of our chiefs are not kept in a special place. The new chief does not touch or handle that of his predecessor. The new chief may cross water but he must not look on a corpse. He will use his predecessor's compound and even if he builds himself a new compound he must sleep in his predecessor's sleeping room. Someone always sleeps in the hut in which the chief is buried. A fire is lighted there. It does not matter if it goes out, it can be rekindled. On the death of a chief all his wives disperse and find new husbands for themselves<sup>2</sup>, they do not become the wives of the new chief who will have his own.

"Each chief has his own *ganu* (*ya* in Bansa, *mafo* in Ngemba) or chief's mother. The old *ganu* continues to live in her own compound. The *ganu* is one of the chief's sisters. No dowry is payable on the daughters of the chief when they are given in marriage.

"Each morning the chief is ceremonially greeted, first by his councillors, then by his blood relatives and then by the people of the town. A young girl cooks the chief's food, except when she is menstruating when some one else does it. The girl eventually becomes a consort of the chief. She brings the food to the chief and then departs so that the chief may eat alone. Any food left over is eaten by his children".

Each adult has his two upper teeth removed. Women's are pulled out; men's broken off. The reason given was that persons may still be fed even when they cannot open their jaws. The chief carried a horse-tail switch whose handle ended in a piece of cast brass on which the main feature was a frog. The chief and his elders denied that the frog had any significance among them.

In October the Voma dance takes place and as in all such dances calabashes are joined together to make trumpets three or four feet long.

The Voma festivities are in honour of *ngwana*, or rulers of the land of whom there are seven. This group then proceeds to a spot called Dola to make propitiating sacrifices. A similar custom in which similar trumpets are used exists at Bali Nyonga.

I had great difficulty in getting the titles or names of office of these seven rulers, hence the following seven are probably incorrect.

Tangsi	Pelu
Nyagang	Sambwegh
Lazi	Gan
	Gbantobe

It is interesting, however, to note that the chief's privy council, as it were, consisted here of seven men, a pattern very widely distributed in West Africa.

At the back of the chief's residence is a wide open clearing shaded by large trees. In it are several granite monoliths. Now the mountain ridge on which Balikumbat village stands consists of a volcanic crest, intrusive through the granite, so that these monoliths have been brought from the granite down below. None of these monoliths shows any sign of carving. The largest monolith is much reduced in size from its former greatness. Owing to a town fire it was cracked. A small monolith about two feet high guards the eastern approach to the village. This monolith has a number of small dents in its surface and the human form roughly scratched on it. These markings are said to have been done quite recently. It was the guard post where sentries were stationed to watch for raiders approaching. The chief denied that it was protective magic to prevent sorcerers or witches from entering the village.

Valiant deeds were rewarded by the chief bestowing in public upon the doer a red feather from the wing of the Turaco. Thereafter the recipient was entitled to wear this emblem in public. Not to do so would be regarded as an affront to the chief.

<sup>1</sup>There is nothing in the history of the Bamum chiefs to support this statement. There is no evidence that any of the Bamum chiefs were customarily killed.

<sup>2</sup>This dispersion of a chief's wives is unusual. They usually remain and live in the palace precincts.



According to Dr. Vielhauer the Bali, whose real name is Ba'ni, were a ruling warrior group settled in Adamawa territory. Then many years ago they moved south to settle among the Ba'ti who lived in the area between the Muta and the Yaunde tribes. After a while the Ba'ni migrated again to settle in their present habitat where they were then called Bali. After they had been settled in their new territory a branch of the Ba'ti joined them, but trouble developed between these two groups and on the 5th November, 1911, the Bali drove the Ba'ti away. The Ba'ti then settled among the Bamums on the right bank of the Nun where their settlements are to-day known as Bali Kali and Baputi.

As a result of the Bali sojourn among the Ba'ti their language changed from *mubako* to *mungaka* (*mu*—I, *ra*—speak, and *ka* an added interjection.) Hence *mungaka* is a comparatively recent language.

Dr. Vielhauer states *mungaka* is a Semi-Bantu language modified by many languages of the Sudanic group. The Ba'ni would, therefore, appear to be ethnologically of Sudanic origin because the main features of their original language, *mubako*, are Sudanic modified by Semi-Bantu influences rather than the reverse. On the other hand *mungaka* is a Semi-Bantu language with Sudanic modifications. A language closely allied to *mubako* has been found in the Adamawa province. *Mubako* or a dialect of it is still used by the following four branches of the Ba'ni, namely, Ba'ni Kumbat, Ba'ni Baram or Galabe, Ba'ni Gaso and the Fossia who were formerly the largest branch of the Ba'ni.

Bali Nyonga is the most disrupted of the Bali settlements because it is an amalgamation of many subtribes. Tita Fokum, the head of one of these subdivisions in Bali Nyonga, repeatedly told me that the Bali Nyonga were not a single tribe because they were composed of people from Fumban, from Bambuli, Mogamo, Yoko, Bangola, Banbanki, Bakaw and the true Bali. These settlements were the results of raids when the women and children of a raided area were carried off and settled in Bali. As a consequence of this miscegenation the old Bali language is no longer

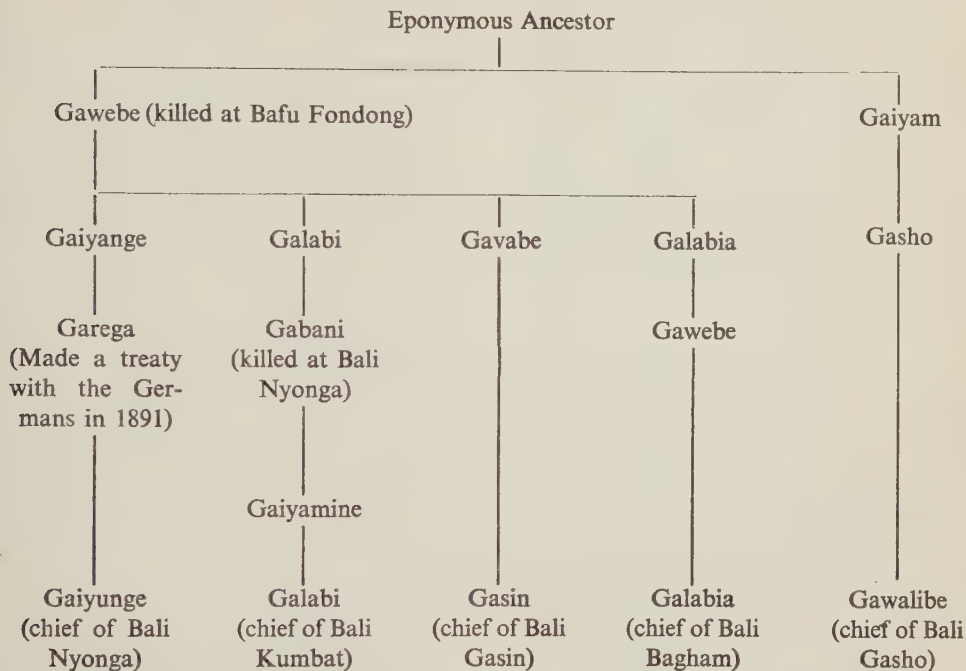
spoken in Bali Nyonga except by the chief and the old people who used it as a secret language. To-day the language spoken in Bali Nyonga is called *Mungaka*. So *Mungaka* belongs, as I have pointed out (1942, CLXII, 47), to the "I say" languages. It was this *Mungaka* language that the Basel missionaries used and perpetuated in print. Rudin (1938, 366) has the following comment on the use the missionaries made of this language: "At Bali the (German) government kept an eye on the Mission and forbade its use of the Bali dialect in surrounding regions in order to restrict the influence of the local ruler."

The history of Bali Nyonga as recorded by Mr. Hunt in 1925 runs as follows: "The Bali are a clan of the Chamba tribe and migrated from Kwancha. . . . Led by their chief Gawebe (Gawulabi?) the grandfather of Garega, with whom the German Foreign Office made a treaty in 1891, they forced their way south from Kwancha, through Tibati and Tikar, fighting as they went. . . . They seemed to have warred with success on Yoko, Ngambe and Bamum, inasmuch as there are now at Bali descendants of these peoples whom they carried along with them. After passing Bamum they went to Bagam, which they burnt, and thence to Bamenjinda, Babaju, past the present Bamenda station to Bafreng, Bande, Bafut and Bameta. . . . They turned south over the present Bali site, to Batibo Bamunyi and on to Bafu Fondong near Dschang, where chief Gawebe was killed. Many years later, and shortly before the Germans established themselves, the Bafu Fondong people were induced by threat of further war to surrender Gawebe's head which is now buried at Bali. It may here be noted as helping to date the battle that the mother of the present chief, who is probably between 70 and 80, was born at Bamumbu just before they reached Bafu Fondong. After this reverse they circled round again to Bagam, near which place, owing to the rivalry of Gawebe's sons they broke up into six parties. Of these sections Bali Nyonga had the largest following with Bali Kumbat as his most formidable rival, and the chiefs of these two sections endeavoured to make the rest acknow-

ledge him. Bali Gansin joined Bali Nyonga and were under him until the Germans came, but Bali Bagam with Bali Gasho put themselves under the protection of Bagam. The sixth section, Bali Muti, broke off from Bali Nyonga and went

north through Wum to Takum and settled in the Kentu district."

The following genealogy was given to Mr. Hunt by the leaders of Bali Nyonga:



Dr. Zintgraff placed the arrival of the Bali at about 1700 A.D. This date appears to be a little early. *The Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Western Africa*, Part IX (London, 1954, 55) places the date of Mbwombwo's reign at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This date appears to be correct.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

### FIELD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 1957

The International African Institute is providing, over a five-year period, a limited number of Research Fellowships and Grants for field studies in Africa. Applications are invited for Fellowships which will normally be tenable as continuous full-time appointments for two years. Consideration will also be given to applications for Grants from persons who can obtain leave from other appointments for a shorter period of field-work and who are seeking financial assistance for travel or field expenses.

The Fellowships will be awarded for approved programmes of research which include field investigations extending over at least twelve months and the preparation, during the period of the Fellowship, of a study based on the field-work and completed for publication. Consideration will be given to proposals for research in the fields of social anthropology, urban sociology, culture change, and linguistics, concerned with such topics as:

The indigenous social organization and cultural values of peoples hitherto little affected by Western influence.

Social change under the influence of Western education, commerce and administration, and the re-structuring of African communities, either rural or urban.

The development of new religious movements including the influence of Christianity, Islam and other religions.

Problems connected with the use of vernacular and European languages in education.

A Fellowship will provide an allowance of £2,000-£2,500, according to requirements, to cover stipend, field expenses and equipment, travel to, from, and within the area of study.

Grants up to a maximum of £1,000 will be awarded towards the costs of travel, equipment, and exceptional living expenses for field studies

normally extending over a period of not less than 6 months.

Applicants are requested to submit a precise programme of research, to state the period over which it would be carried out, and to provide an estimate of the necessary expenditure on travel, equipment, etc., which would be entailed. They should give particulars of their academic positions and qualifications, including any special training and experience, and each applicant should, with their prior consent, give the names of two persons of academic standing, having personal knowledge of his or her attainments and capacity to carry out effectively the research project proposed.

The first awards will be made in September, 1957. Applications for Fellowships or Grants for studies beginning during 1957 or in 1958 should be made in writing, not later than July 1st, 1957, to: The Director, International African Institute, St. Dunstan's Chambers, 10-11 Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

### REPUBLICATION OF BOOKS ON AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Under the auspices of the C.C.T.A. (Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa, South of the Sahara) an international meeting of linguists was held in London in November, 1956. The meeting was attended by representatives from Belgium, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, France, Great Britain, Portugal, the Union of South Africa.

It was decided to draw up a list of those African grammars and dictionaries and other linguistic works of permanent value that are now out of print but are still continually needed and sought after. Works from this list will be reprinted or reproduced photographically as soon as funds become available.

Dr Guy Atkins was asked to compile a list of such works by seeking the help and advice of

Africanists in all parts of the world, in order to make the list as complete as possible.

Recommendations of works to be included in the list should specify the following points: (1) Name of the African territory concerned; (2) Name of the author; (3) Title of the book; (4) Number of volumes and pages; (5) Publisher; (6) Place and date of publication; (7) Price (if known); (8) A note on the scope and value of the book; (9) The place where a copy can be found; (10) Details of any previous attempt to get the book republished.

Dr Atkins will be grateful for any suggestions regarding this list of books, and also for the names and addresses of any other persons (including language committees, university and government departments, publishers, book-sellers) who might be able to assist him in his task.

Replies should be sent to: Dr Guy Atkins, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, W.C.1.

### SWAZILAND RESEARCH PROJECT

The Institute for Social Research of the University of Natal, Durban, will shortly undertake a study of certain social and demographic aspects of recent developments in the Swaziland Protectorate. The scheme, which is sponsored by the Colonial Social Science Research Council through the Swaziland Government, provides for the appointment, for a three-year period, of a sociologist or social anthropologist. The Institute hopes to secure a senior research officer who, in addition to being suitably qualified in sociology or social anthropology, is familiar with demographic techniques and prepared to learn the Swazi language.

In broad outline, the problem to be studied is one of labour stabilization for the development of the Protectorate's economy, which is largely agricultural. New enterprises, mostly irrigation and forestry schemes have started and are for their development dependent on a steady supply of stable Swazi labour. New economic development might also help to bring about a

more even distribution of the population and so relieve pressure in present high-density areas. Such a re-distribution, together with the requirements of improved land usage, would inevitably call for considerable adjustments in the traditional social and economic patterns, which the Government would not like to see unduly disturbed. A thorough understanding of this background, as well as a keen assessment of the potential scope and social implications of planned economic development are needed. The Government hopes this study will provide the information. It is, therefore, an assignment in which the scientific results should primarily aim at being useful to an Administration primarily concerned with practical problems.

The study will require about two years of active field work in Swaziland, some of it in close consultation and co-operation with Government administrative staff and experts in agriculture, forestry, irrigation and other fields; and from nine to twelve months writing up at the Institute for Social Research in Durban. In order to determine population trends, the field work will include the collection of a certain amount of demographic data on a sampling basis in addition to the normal analysis of the social structure. A thorough study of the indigenous concepts regarding land rights and usages, of animal husbandry, and of the potential economic resources of land, stock and people, is proposed.

The research project will be carried out under the direction of Dr J. F. Holleman, who has recently been appointed Director of the Institute for Social Research.

### LAW AMONG THE NUER

From DR M. D. W. JEFFREYS,  
JOHANNESBURG.

The point of view expressed by Mr Kerr on page 139 of *African Studies*, 15, 3, 1956, about the Nuer always having had a body of law even before the passing of the *Chiefs' Court Ordinance of 1931*, cannot be allowed to pass without some comment. Both Dr Howell's point of view and



that of Professor Evans-Pritchard that the Nuer had no law is correct. Holding the same point of view are the following eminent anthropologists. Fortes (1941, 271), writing of the Tallensi of the Gold Coast, remarks ". . . as there was formerly no completely dominant social unit or association, there could be no constituted legal machinery backed by irresistible force". It may come as a surprise to Mr Kerr that Malinowski, whom he invokes as a supporter of the contention that primitive societies have law, and that therefore the Nuer have always had a body of law, held an opposite view. Malinowski (1932, 158) wrote: "The chief's authority, his privileges, the customary give-and-take which exists between him and the community—all that is merely, so to speak, the mechanism through which the force of tradition acts. For there is no organized physical means by which those in authority could enforce their will in a case like this." Nay, Malinowski went further, for he (1926, 36) wrote: "Science, of course, does not exist in any uncivilized community as a driving power, criticising, renewing, constructing. . . . But on this criterion neither is there law, nor religion, nor government among savages." In view of these remarks Malinowski's definition of law becomes comprehensible not as a definition of law but as a description of the social structure. He (1934, LXIII) wrote: "As regards civil law, that is, rules referring mainly to economic services, problems of property and the discharge of personal obligations, I personally have come to the conclusion not merely from my own field-work, but from all the evidence available, that the forces of law reside in the systematic concatenation of all rules which is the essence of social institutions."

Here Hoebel's criticism of another definition of law by Malinowski may be considered. Hoebel (1940, LIV, 45) wrote: "Professor Malinowski's anthropological definition of law, namely 'civil law, the primitive law governing all phases of tribal life, consists of binding obligations, regarded as a right by one party and acknowledged as a duty by the other, and kept in force

by a specific mechanism of reciprocity and publicity inherent in the structure of their society', is really so meaningless from a legal point of view as to be useless in the development of a comparative jurisprudence." Hence as a supporter of the theory that the Nuer have always had a body of law Malinowski is useless, whereas the statement that people of primitive cultures have no law conforms with the outlook of other eminent social anthropologists. Thus Radcliffe-Brown (1948, IX, 202) wrote: "The obligations imposed on individuals in societies where there are no legal sanctions will be regarded as matters of custom and convention but not of law; in this sense some simple societies have no law . . ." Dr Wagner (1941, 219) writing of the Kavirondo remarked: "Such group action in the face of threatening danger, taken spontaneously, i.e., without a hearing of the case and often on the spur of the moment is clearly not the same as institutionalized jurisdiction by the tribal society through recognized judicial authorities." None of which do these Kavirondo possess. Kroeber and Waterman (1931, 346) write: "They [the Ifugaos] have no form of political government: there is, therefore, no constitutional or statutory law. Inasmuch as they have no courts or judges, there is no law based on judicial decisions."

Schapera is under no illusions about the absence of law among the Bushmen for he (1930, 152) writes: "In general, when disputes arise between the members of a Bushman band there is no appeal to any supreme authority . . . for there is no such authority. . . . The only remedy is self help." Much the same state of affairs exists among the Arctic food-gatherers. Thus Sumner (1934, 501) writes: "The Eskimo have no civil organization outside the family. All justice depends on this immediate coercing of wrong-doers by force. Hence death often results. Retaliation is the duty of every kinsman."

In the face of the support of so many eminent anthropologists it is a rash act to run counter to them without giving good reason for so doing. The only reason that I can find for Mr Kerr holding the view that the Nuer have always

had a body of law is his remark: "On this view [that the Nuer have no law] the provision in the Ordinance [the *Chiefs' Courts Ordinance of 1931*] that the courts should administer Native law would have laid on them an impossible task and this is such a startling proposition that one would have expected a fuller discussion of the authorities. Dr Howell's work itself is evidence of the prior existence of law for the detailed and precise system he describes, containing as it does marked similarities to the laws of other African tribes, requires a period of time far in excess of that since 1931 for its evolution or even for the reception of the institutions of other laws, and there is no evidence that the courts have encouraged the latter." So far from Dr Howell's book providing evidence for the prior existence of law existing among the Nuer before the inauguration of any court it does just the opposite. It shows that there were no courts and hence no law.

Seagle, an eminent American jurist, made this point abundantly clear when he (1941, 11) wrote: "Mankind has been governed by custom longer than it has lived under the reign of law." It is thus quite clear that until the first court was created in 1931 the Nuer were living under a system of custom, i.e. the social structure, and not under any system of law.

Hoebel in his study of the Comanche Indians of North America has made this point abundantly clear. He (1940, 54, 45) writes: "No prevailing concept of the nature of law as given in current definitions will fit the facts as we find them in Comanche society. The ideology of orthodox political science and jurisprudence, expressed in terms of *Commands of the Sovereign, rules of the state, an obligation imposed by the lawmaker*, have no meaning here, nor in the data pertaining to most primitive societies. Not even so sociologically oriented a definition of the law as that advanced by the late Justice Cordozo serves to fit the needs of an anthropological approach to jurisprudence. For when he writes that a principle or rule of law is *a principle or rule of conduct so established as to justify a prediction with reasonable certainty that it will be enforced*

*by the courts if its authority is challenged*, one must conclude: NO COURTS: NO LAWS". Hence, until the Nuer obtained their first court in 1931 they were without law and without any antecedent body of law though they had a social structure and a body of custom; in other words Seagles' (1941, 34) dictum: "The test of law in the strict sense is the same for both primitive and civilized communities: namely the existence of courts." Hence until 1931 both Evans-Pritchard and Howell were right in maintaining that the Nuer had no law. As a result of the creation of courts among them the same thing as happened in Saxon England under William the Norman, is now happening among the Nuer. A Nuer body of common law is developing. A glance at what happened in England will illumine what is happening to the Nuer. Thus Hammond (1921, 67) in his *Concise Legal History* writes: "Upon the establishment of the *Royal Courts* after the Norman Conquest, the judges . . . selected the best from amongst the old local customs of the Saxons. . . . Our Common Law is really judge-made law." Or put more succinctly, English Common Law is Court Consolidated Custom. Only those customs enforced by the Royal Courts became Law. The same thing is now happening among the Nuer. Only those customs of the Nuer social structure which are not repugnant to good conscience, natural justice and morality will be allowed in the Nuer Courts. Thus the custom or, in Mr Kerr's point of view, the law of the blood feud will never now be incorporated into the Nuer Common Law.

In conclusion I may as well knock away one of Mr Kerr's legal supports. He quotes Sir Frederick Pollock's definition of law which is *sui generis* to Pollock. It is perhaps a little unfortunate that an eminent American jurist, Seagle (1941, 4), writes of Pollock as being confused as to what law is. I prefer Sir John Salmond's outlook. He (1947, 54) wrote: "If there are any rules prior to, and independent of the state, they may greatly resemble law; they may be the primeval substitutes for law; they may be the historical source from which law developed and proceeds, but they are not them-



selves law". In other words, until 1931 the Nuer had no law.

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## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

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- DIKE, K. ONWUKA, *et alii*: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. Ibadan University Press, Nigeria, 1956.
- DOWNING, CHARLES: *Russian Tales and Legends*. Oxford University Press, London. 1956.
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics.** H. A. GLEASON. Henry Holt & Co., New York. 1955. x + 389 pp. \$5.50.

There is in South Africa, we understand, and perhaps elsewhere too, a saying that "phonemics is common sense made difficult"<sup>1</sup>. No doubt for those fortunate and intuitively-gifted ones who are able to view phonemics in this light, morphemics, and for that matter, all the rest of linguistics may likewise amount to nothing more than an unnecessary complication and obscuration of the obvious. For them this volume will presumably have nothing of interest or of value. However, for those who, like this reviewer, lack the intuitive insight, the publication of this new work by Prof. Gleason is most welcome and opportune. It not only makes the "artificial" difficulties of phonemics much more palatable, masticable and digestible, but also smooths the way in so many other aspects of modern linguistics.

This work gives us probably the widest and most comprehensive account yet available in a single volume of linguistic science, primarily as it has developed in the United States in recent years. The order of treatment is perhaps a little unusual, if one expects the traditional progression from phonetics through phonemics, morphology, syntax, etc., but Prof. Gleason has found considerable practical advantages in his arrangement, in teaching linguistics at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. The book has developed out of a repeatedly revised syllabus and course in introductory linguistics, as presented successively to more than a dozen different groups of students; and preliminary mimeographed editions have also been successfully used in a number of other institutions.

After a preliminary general chapter entitled "Language", there follows a series dealing with English consonants, vowels, and stress and

intonation. These provide a background analysis, without going into too much detail about the principles involved, of the phonetics and phonemics of a language with which readers are necessarily acquainted, and for whom, therefore, the data under discussion are familiar. Then come three chapters devoted to detailed study of morphemics, followed by an outline of English morphology, and further chapters on types of inflection, syntax, and inflectional categories. In this way the student is enabled to get to grips with the major part of structural analysis without having to devote more than a minimum amount of time to the complexities of phonetics and phonemics; at the same time he acquires experience and facility in linguistic techniques which are of very real value to him when he does come to deal with the phonological aspects.

At this stage we return to a series of chapters treating in detail of phonemics, and articulatory and acoustic phonetics, followed by one on English phonemics and others on "Phonemic Systems" and "Phonemic Problems in Language Learning". These chapters (12 to 18) are, however, presented in such a way as to be largely independent of those on morphology, and can be read or studied before them if the traditional order is preferred or desirable for other reasons. The final series of chapters deals with the process of communication, variation in speech, writing systems, written languages, language classification and language families. In conclusion there is a useful selected bibliography and a valuable set of notes on the selection of reading material for study in a number of specialized aspects of linguistics: General treatments, Descriptive technique, Phonetics, Writing systems, and so on. Obviously in a single volume such as this, one cannot always expect to find the same depth and detail as in monographs such as K. L. Pike's *Phonemics* and E. A. Nida's *Morphology*; but one is surprised and delighted not only at

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by D. Ziervogel in his review of L. W. Lanham: *A Study of GiTonga of Inhambane*, in *African Studies*, 15, 2, 1956, p. 90

the breadth of its scope, but also at the actual amount of detail which has been packed into this book.

However, there are two important statements made by Prof. Gleason, both negative, and presented very categorically, whose validity I would question. In paragraph 6.23, p. 76, he avers that, while zero allomorphs may not be unusual, the recognition of zero morphemes is unnecessary, would lead to increased complexity of description and is logically indefensible. In the noun prefix systems of the Bantu languages, it is not at all unusual to find one or more zero prefixes. The most common of these occurs in Class 1a, for which in the majority of Bantu languages there is no prefix at all. It could be argued, of course, that this is a zero allomorph of the prefix of Class 1, since in most cases both Class 1 and Class 1a have the same series of concords or prefixal agreements in grammatically related forms. This view would certainly result in more complex description: It would cut across certain structural (not to mention notional) correlations, e.g., of singulars and plurals (Class 1 singular: 2 plural; Class 1a singular: 2a plural; and the Class 1 prefix as such may sometimes have a zero allomorph!), while hundreds, perhaps thousands, of forms would have to be listed as having a morphologically distributed zero prefix, an allomorph of the Class 1 prefix, whereas the distribution of Bantu noun prefix allomorphs is normally quite simple and straightforward. But even this far from satisfactory argument would not be tenable at all in the case of Class 5 in a number of languages, and not infrequently other classes too, for which no vestige of a noun prefix is to be found in synchronic data.

There is the further possibility of treating the noun or the noun prefix and all its concords as constituting a single discontinuous morpheme, as proposed by Zellig Harris in "Discontinuous Morphemes", *Language*, 21, 3, 1945, and again in his *Methods in Structural Linguistics*. This

approach would necessitate the recognition of up to a dozen, perhaps more, discontinuous parts for each morpheme, each of which parts might have half-a-dozen or more "allomorphs", with a very involved set of rules for distribution and with separate rankings or series within each set of allomorphs, corresponding to the various series of pronouns and qualificative and predicative concords. Furthermore, in some Bantu languages certain forms in the concord system are themselves discontinuous, for example, the second person plural object concord in Zezuru (Shona) is /ku- . . . -yi/. Following Harris we should therefore have a discontinuous form as one of the parts, within a system of discontinuous parts, of a morpheme. Harris's own comment that his approach gives rise to "some apparent loss of efficiency" in description could hardly understate the situation more.

The second of Prof. Gleason's negative statements is: "In any discussion of phonology the only kind of contexts which can be considered are phonologic, *never morphologic* (12.9, p. 164, my italics). Further on he says ". . . the analyst must assure himself that the phonologic results are independent of the grammar. That is, he must be able to describe the phonemic system and support his analysis without any appeal to any morphologic results. . . ." (13.4, p. 175). I do not believe that this view is tenable. In terms of native speaker reaction there is no doubt whatsoever that each of the vowel pairs [ɛ, e] and [ɔ, o] in the Sotho languages of South Africa constitutes a single phoneme, at present written /ɛ/ and /o/ respectively. In the vast majority of cases the allophones [ɛ and e], [ɔ and o] are in complementary phonologic distribution; in a few cases there is free variation; and in a limited number of morphemes only [e] and [o] occur, *but* in phonologic contexts where we should expect to find only [ɛ] and [ɔ]<sup>1</sup>. A similar situation occurs at least dialectally in Xhosa. There appears here to be no alternative but to recognize that allophones may be morphologically distributed. One may well ask

<sup>1</sup>For an adequate albeit outmoded description of the situation in Tswana, see D. T. Cole: *An Introduction to Tswana Grammar*, Longmans, Green & Co., Cape Town, 1955, p. 9ff.



also, why not? Have we any positive evidence to the contrary? If not, is it wise to make categorical negative statements such as these when our knowledge of the phonemic and other structures of the world's languages is still so fragmentary? It does seem rather strange, when all parts in the structure of a linguistic system are, presumably, closely interrelated and interdependent, that the principle of describing the distribution of allomorphs in both morphologic and phonologic terms is assumed without question, whereas the description of allophonic distribution is expressly restricted to phonologic environments. Strange also that we should recognize the possibility of "free" or "unconditioned" alternation of allophones, in which there is no distributional determining factor at all, but reject the possibility of a distribution in morphemic terms.

Associated with Prof. Gleason's excellent exposition of the scope, principles and methods of modern descriptive linguistics is a companion volume, *Workbook in Descriptive Linguistics*, issued by the same publishers at \$2.25. This contains 88 pages of graded exercises and problems for the use of students who wish to apply the principles and to familiarize themselves with the techniques of linguistic analysis. For each chapter of the *Introduction*, there are several problems in the *Workbook* (unfortunately not without some typographical and other errors in this first edition), and these all represent actual languages, and therefore the actual complexities thereof, though simplification of the data has sometimes been necessary in order to achieve the degree of grading necessary for an introductory course. These two volumes constitute a most valuable combination. As yet, unfortunately, none of the South African universities offers courses in linguistics. Meanwhile, until they do—which we hope will be very soon—we have no hesitation in recommending these two volumes by Prof. Gleason to all who are concerned with and interested in language teaching and linguistic research.

D. T. COLE

**The Yao Village: A Study in the Social Structure of a Nyasaland Tribe.** J. CLYDE MITCHELL. Manchester University Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Manchester. 1956. xviii+235 pp., plates, diags., tables, maps, genealogies. 30s.

This book has a straightforward and appropriate title. It deals with the Yao village from without and from within, and in so doing gives a revealing picture of the social and political organization of an important Nyasaland tribe.

The Yao, as the nineteenth-century intermediaries between the east-coast Arabs and the tribes of the interior, played an important part in the slave trade. This phase of their history has left them with a more varied way of life than that of their neighbours, with a formal adherence to Islam and with political power which, though broken by White conquest, has in some measure been restored under the Nyasaland version of Indirect Rule. Although they have taken readily to the use of money they have not been especially susceptible to other Western influences, being less easily converted to Christianity and less involved than other Nyasaland tribes in labour migration to the more developed parts of the Federation.

Their resulting cultural distinctiveness provides the social scientist with an excellent opportunity of analysing and describing not only the features that are peculiar to their social organization, such as their political structure based largely on historical accident and opportunism, but also those that they share with neighbouring East Central Bantu tribes such as matrilineal kinship structure, uxorilocal marriage and certain distinctive magico-religious beliefs. Professor Mitchell has taken full advantage of this opportunity.

The book falls into two natural halves, the village from without and the village from within. The first half deals with the geographical and historical influences affecting present-day Yao political organization, and in particular analyses the factors determining the ranking of village headman into the prestige hierarchy that comprises the political framework of each of the

dozen-odd chiefdoms on which this study is concentrated. Among factors contributing to a headman's prestige are: having been a Yao "Invader" rather than a Nyanja "Aboriginee" or an Nguru "Newcomer"; being connected with the chief either historically or by kinship; and being a Moslem. It is only effective participation in the political process, however, that realizes these potentialities and brings a headman rewards such as the right to wear a scarlet headband, the right to hold initiation ceremonies and the official recognition of his village by the Administration.

The office of headman bridges the village's external and internal systems of relationship. Outside the village, the headman, as the representative of his people, is involved in the struggle for power and prestige. Within it he is enmeshed in the tangled and sometimes straining bonds of kinship. In both directions he derives some security from the mystical beliefs that permit of what Stefaniszyn has appropriately called "nominal reincarnation",<sup>1</sup> i.e., his succession to not only the status of his predecessor but also his genealogical position. Outside the village, nominal reincarnation maintains him in "perpetual relationships" with other headmen and chiefs, to each of whose predecessors one of his own ancestors, perhaps a forgotten number of generations ago, was tied by the bonds of kinship. Within the village, his elevated genealogical position increases the battery of sanctions, both mystical and secular, which he can apply to those who threaten the unity of the group he leads.

Most of the threats to village unity originate in the dynamics of the kinship system. The basic social group among the Yao, both jurally and residentially, is the matrilineage. Yao society is refreshingly different from conjugally-organized Western society or again from those non-Western, consanguineally-organized societies that bolster conjugal ties by the passage of bridewealth. The Yao matrilineage is the source of a person's support, health and proud

identity. By comparison, the conjugal group is of small account; and it is little wonder that many marriages are sacrificed on the altar of the matrilineage.

In spite of its massive unity the matrilineage is riven by planes of cleavage along which it segments as it expands. In its typically localized form it consists of the headman, his sisters and their uterine descendants. A man's sisters are referred to as his *mbumba*—female dependants or, to use Mitchell's translation, 'sorority-group'; and by extension this term is applied also to their female and even male descendants. In each generation, however, and within each segment of it, male members arise and become responsible for their sisters (*mbumba*) who form convenient nuclei for the following that is the common coin for transactions of prestige and politics. This means that, as time goes on, the headman's leadership of the matrilineage is challenged by his sister's sons, one of whom, the first-born of his eldest sister, is destined to succeed him. Each of these young men is the guardian of a small group descended from a single ancestress (e.g., one of the headman's own or classificatory sisters). In modern parlance it is a matrilineage segment, a sub-group liable to break off from sub-groups of similar order—with or without the catalytic aid of a sorcery accusation; and its differentiation is a threat to the equanimity of the village headman and a challenge to his armoury of mystical and secular sanctions for preserving matrilineage unity.

Thus far we have referred to the Yao village as if it comprised a single matrilineage. While this is true of some villages, it is not so of others where a more complex kinship composition is to be found. In these there is typically a dominant matrilineage carrying the village headmanship, and a series of subsidiary matrilineages, the commonest type of which comprises the matrilineal descendants of the wife of one of the male members of the dominant matrilineage who for various reasons, e.g., his being headman has departed from the usual uxori-local form of

<sup>1</sup>B. Stefaniszyn, "Funeral Friendship in Central Africa", *Africa*, xx (1950), 290-306.



marriage and brought her to his village of origin. A chapter on these patrilocally-linked subsidiary matrilineages shows that, though they add to the headman's following, they are an unstable element in it.

Mitchell effectively sums up his account of Yao social structure in this passage:

"In Yao society . . . we may distinguish three orders or levels of social grouping:

- (1) The matrilineage which consists of ranked lineage segments.
- (2) The village which consists of ranked matrilineages.
- (3) The chiefdom which consists of ranked villages.

It is only at the most fundamental of these levels, i.e., within the matrilineage, that matrilineal descent provides a principle for organizing group relations. At the next level, i.e., within the village, matrilineal kinship gives way to other types of primary kinship between key personalities in the structure. At the third level, i.e., within the chiefdom, kinship appears only in the form of the highly formalized 'perpetual' kinship—the actual links may well have been forgotten long ago. The same kinship term may be applied between personalities at all three levels of organization, but the content of the term changes according to the field of interaction." (p. 208.)

Mitchell's book is important and absorbing, not only because of its interesting subject-matter—the social structure of an important tribe in a little-known cultural area—but also because of the techniques that the writer employs. His work is a happy union of sociology and social anthropology, i.e., of general and comparative sociology. He employs the rigorous demographic and statistical techniques of the former without discarding the subtler, and inevitably more stimulating and questionable, approaches of the latter. On the one hand he has a highly commendable habit of indicating, where he can, the statistical confidence limits of his conclusions; and the thoroughness of his fieldwork makes it possible for him to insert in unobtrusive footnotes a

great many  $\chi^2$  and C.R. values. On the other, this habit is by no means a fetish that dulls his sensitivity to the social significance of mystical beliefs and rituals. Two conceptions of significance, the statistical and the symbolic, are skilfully blended.

M. G. MARWICK

**A Bushman Dictionary.** DOROTHEA F. BLEEK. American Oriental Series, Vol. 41. American Oriental Society, New Haven, Connecticut. 1956. xii+773 pp. \$8.50.

In the publication of this dictionary, a monumental piece of work by the late Dorothea Bleek has come to fruition; and what seemed an insuperable task for the printers has been accomplished. The original Ms. of this great work was typed out by Miss Bleek herself; she completed the task, and was joyed to know that publishing had been arranged with the American Oriental Society; but she passed away before the work of printing had been put in hand. Some ten years have now elapsed since Miss Bleek's death; and the publishers were confronted with two main difficulties. Owing to the intricate and varying signs and diacritics employed in recording Bushman words collected by numbers of writers, apart from the main works of Dr Bleek, Miss Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek herself, photo-static reproduction was necessary. But Miss Bleek's typing—much of which I have seen, and I saw her at work on this Ms. in 1945—was not usable for such a purpose. The whole work had to be retyped; and certainly Dr Helen Hause of Chicago is to be congratulated on a splendid job in this connection. Then it was necessary to find someone qualified and ready to undertake the onerous and responsible duty of checking this typescript to assure the best production. Again the publishers were fortunate in securing the services of Professor J. A. Engelbrecht of Pretoria University.

Dr Engelbrecht provided an Introduction to the dictionary, and this gives valuable historical facts regarding the great contribution of the

Bleek family to Bushman studies. He discusses Miss Bleek's methods of dealing with all the material she collected from published works, beside her own, her father's and her aunt's Mss. To quote Dr Engelbrecht:

"She made it her aim to include every list of Bushman words that had ever been recorded—a most laborious undertaking, in that it meant scrutinizing whatever sources were known or presumed to have such lists. It further meant that larger vocabularies, representing different languages and dialects, had to be assembled. The desire to include as much as possible had its advantages even though it implied that unsupported data also had to find a place in what purports to be a comparative dictionary."

In this, the one weakness of the work is that the author has been unable to bring critical discrimination to bear upon the vast material she has used. Entries gleaned from certain sources are undoubtedly unreliable, many having been misheard or misinterpreted by untrained recorders. In the circumstances, and owing to the difficulty of checking up in many cases, we cannot see what else Miss Bleek could have done. Her method of transliteration, for the purposes of this work, might in certain instances be challenged. This also Dr Engelbrecht discusses in his introduction.

Miss Bleek classifies the 28 languages and dialects, which contribute to the dictionary, into Northern, Southern and Central groups, the Northern and Southern being closer together in formation than the Central, which has evidently been influenced mainly by Hottentot.

The dictionary contains roughly, I should say, 15,000 entries. It must be remembered, however, that a number of dialectical forms contribute to these, and in certain cases entries are considerably multiplied. To take one example, all the following entries refer to one root form: ○'a, ○bo, ○bwaa, ○ho, ○moe, ○'osi, ○po, all indicating "tree", "wood", "stick". Further, under the same labial click ○, occur about 33 entries, interpreted as indicating "boy", "son" (8), "child" (7), "girl, daughter" (9), "grandson

grand-daughter" (4), and "small, young" (5). A careful examination of these entries will trace them all back to a single root, basically indicating "young, little".

Added to the main dictionary is an English-Bushman index of 83 pages, comprising approximately 3,000 English entries. An interesting research study from all this material would be to determine the average root vocabulary in any one Bushman language. It would be difficult to hazard an estimate without such research, but Miss Bleek's previous *Comparative Vocabularies* revealed less than a thousand entries from any single dialect. Even the same Bushman will pronounce the same word in several ways on the same day; this results, with some recorders, in a multiplicity of entries for what is really one word.

Miss Bleek has done linguistics a great service. Her labours have preserved much in Bushman languages which would certainly have been lost without her devoted research and recording. This valuable *Bushman Dictionary* is a fitting monument to her scholarship and disinterested industry.

C.M.D.

**Custom and Conflict in Africa.** MAX GLUCKMAN.  
Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1955, ix+173 pp.  
12s. 6d.

The central theme of the six lectures broadcast on the Third Programme and constituting this book is that the conflicting allegiances into which men are aligned by custom balance one another and result in cohesion. Thus conflicts, instead of disrupting, establish the social and moral order. Pressure to reach agreement is brought to bear upon enemies in one set of relationships because they are allies in another set. This reconciliation of opposing loyalties in the interests of social solidarity is characteristic of societies, such as those in Africa, in which the economy is undifferentiated and static and relations between men are face-to-face and based upon multiplex interests.



In societies, such as the Nuer, segmented into kinship groups lacking instituted political authority, where the blood-feud prevails, the complex interdependences between the groups and the ties of neighbourhood which cut across those of the kinship groups, tend to inhibit revenge, because men recognize the need for peace and for a moral order in which peace may flourish. At the level at which chiefs are found, as among the Zulu or Swazi, rebellions against instituted authority are not revolutions to overthrow the political order but protests against the incumbent because he falls short of the ideal people have of his office. Such rebellions accordingly do not destroy but vindicate and establish the political order. Estrangements in the family are inevitable in such societies, because there are conflicts in it owing to the allegiance of its members to wider groups of kin who have interests diverging from those of the family, e.g., a husband who gives too much time and attention to his wife finds himself in conflict with his kin. But here again the contrary allegiances balance and redress one another and produce cohesion in the wider society. In societies of this nature, since people are dependent upon kin and friends for most of their needs, events and particularly misfortunes, tend to be interpreted in terms of personal relations. Owing to limited opportunities they are in competition with one another; this breeds bad feeling which charged as it is with mystical danger, leads to witchcraft accusations. The disruption that results, however, leads to new adjustments of social ties in the wider social order. Moreover the threat of the effects of bad feeling exerts pressure upon men to observe social virtues lest they be accused of witchcraft. Here again custom creates conflicts in certain sets of relationships but resolves them when the wider social order is examined.

A similar analysis is made of the licence often found in ritual. Thus, in certain Zulu agricultural rites, women went naked, sang lewd songs and acted as if they were men. Yet this licence is permitted and even encouraged because it is conceived to bless the crops. The analysis shows that the licence, often involving a reversal of

roles, is a form of protest by women against their role of subordination, but the effect, like that of the rituals of rebellion in the installation of a chief, is to bring prosperity and to reaffirm the social order.

This analysis of conflicts is a good illustration of the methods used by anthropologists in dissecting customs and showing their significance. The author constantly compares and contrasts African and western European society, which should make the analysis intelligible to laymen. In a final lecture dealing with the bonds in the Colour Bar, the application of the general theme to the conditions of South Africa will be found particularly illuminating. Allegiances in one colour group conflict with those in another; but while this is part of our social order, there are also divisions in the ranks of the different colour groups because of the cross-colour interdependences; and these divisions exert pressure towards settlements of differences. Unfortunately, however, the divisions are badly balanced; settlements can be only partial, and they breed new conflicts, not cohesion, because of the overriding importance of the colour line and because the settlements cannot be in terms of a generally accepted social or moral order. As the conflicts cannot be resolved or lead to cohesion, it is only fear of force and the power of money which keeps Africans working in a series of relations with other colour groups.

Written in non-technical language, the book is very readable and easily intelligible to laymen, who will gain some insight from it into the manner in which anthropologists analyse customs and bring them into relation with the social structure. To the student of anthropology, some of the analyses will be familiar, but he will find much that is arresting in others. It may be doubted whether conflicts of the nature dealt with actually promote cohesion, over and above preventing total disruption. Some of the interpretations, too, particularly those relating to sex differences, may appear to be strained, and in other cases more evidence is necessary to establish suggested correlations, as well as further analysis of significant variations in other tribes

than those dealt with. But this would have complicated the argument and perhaps defeated the purpose of the lectures, which must be judged as popular rather than rigidly scientific expositions. Nevertheless, there is much food for thought for the student, who is provided with a useful reading list for pursuing the subject further. As an introduction to modern methods of anthropological analysis this book can be strongly recommended to the general public as well as to the student.

J. D. KRIGE

**A Maasai Grammar (with Vocabulary).** A. N. TUCKER and J. TOMPO OLE MPAAYEI. Longmans, Green & Co., London. 1955. 30s.

The pastoral Maasai of Kenya and Tanganyika, numbering c. 200,000, have been classified linguistically as Nilo-Hamites, along with such groups as the Nandi and Suk of Kenya and the Teso and Karamojong of Uganda. In the past, the language, perhaps owing to its complexity, has received little serious attention, and it has been left to the authors of the present work to follow up the early pioneering of A. C. Hollis (*The Masai: Their Language and Folk-lore*). The Missions, of course, have worked continuously in this field but they have been primarily concerned with the practical need for communication, a need exemplified by the recent *Twelve Lessons in Masai* by R. T. Shaffer.

The work under review must, therefore, be welcomed heartily, as the most detailed study of the language to date. Not only is attention given to the significance of tone, but also to vowel quality; and the orthography adopted is that already recognized for related languages of the Southern Sudan and Uganda.

The reviewer can claim no competence in the language and no evaluation of the Maasai used will here be offered.

The work is divided into three parts. Part I introduces Nouns and Adjectives, in the orthography approved for use in schools and textbooks. In Part II, wherein the verb-system is

treated, variation in vowel quality is noted by variation in type-face. Thus, "close" vowels continue to be printed in normal type, while "open" vowels are printed in heavy type. In this part too, the authors note that, "tone diacritics are added where serious ambiguity would otherwise exist. . . ." From the extent to which this appears necessary, it is clear that tone presents a serious problem for the student. Part III is concerned exclusively with tone, and introduces nothing new grammatically. These chapters, it is suggested by the authors, may be omitted by anyone not interested in this aspect, though the abundant use of tone-marking in Part II has already made it clear just how important this aspect is. Finally, as Appendices, there is a Maasai text, and a useful Maasai-English/English-Maasai Word-list, the items of which are taken, for convenience, exclusively from the Grammar and the companion Reader (*Inkuti Pukunot oo lMaasai* by J. Tompo ole Mpaayei, Annotated African Texts, III, O.U.P., 1954). Throughout the work the authors have avoided innovations in grammatical terminology and their general grammatical treatment presents little that is unfamiliar.

So far as can be seen, it is nowhere stated for whom the work is primarily intended, though it is clear from the arrangement of the material and from references in the text, that it is intended to meet the needs both of the practical student and of the specialist. This, it is suggested, is over-optimistic. The majority of those anxious to learn the language—if indeed there be more than a few enthusiasts—are probably concerned with practical issues, and for such people the treatment in Part II, especially, seems unduly compressed. Shorter chapters and more exercises would be valuable, particularly in the long chapters on derivative and compound derivative verbs with only five exercises between them. For all except the most highly educated African students, some simplification seems essential, and since, to my knowledge, no provision is made for the vernacular in the higher levels of education in Kenya or Tanganyika, the book's appeal must be limited to an extremely small



number, even if the price proves no additional deterrent.

The specialist, by contrast, will particularly welcome Part III and the careful documentation of tonal grammar which it contains. Here the emphasis is clearly less on teaching than on description, and one cannot, therefore, look for the same degree of prediction as is possible for the earlier parts. Nevertheless it is a pity that it was not possible to formulate some general principles of tonal behaviour: in the case of "down-step" for example, the frequent footnote references to its operation seem to hint at the possibility of a more comprehensive statement than that on pp. 172-3, which merely notes its occurrence.

Clearly the needs of the practical student and the specialist differ widely, and the danger of all works such as this is that in trying to cater for the needs of both, neither is wholly satisfied. Would it, one wonders, have been so much more costly to prepare two books: one a scientific description for specialists, and the other a severely practical handbook for those for whom communication is a daily necessity?

Such considerations, may, however, seem trivial compared with the very real achievement of a work that must remain both a standard reference work on the language for many years to come, and a valuable source-book for students of Nilo-Hamitic languages generally.

W. H. WHITELEY

**The Bantu of North Kavirondo: Vol. II, Economic Life.** Günter Wagner. Oxford University Press for International African Institute. London. 1956. viii+184 pp. 36s.

This volume on the economic life of the Bantu dwelling in North Kavirondo on the littoral of Lake Victoria is the companion to the volume on kinship structure and magical and religious beliefs and practices. It is published post-

humously: Dr Lucy Mair edited the manuscript and prepared it for publication.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first deals with traditional technological processes: house-building, wood-work, iron-work, pottery, basketry and leather-work. The second is concerned with food production under four main headings: tillage, modern developments in agriculture, animal husbandry and hunting, trapping and food-gathering. The third chapter briefly discusses diet under such captions as preparation of foods, sociology of meals and recent dietary changes. The fourth chapter offers a thorough examination of the concepts of property with reference to rights in land, rights in cattle and rights in food and small stock. The short final chapter on trade and exchange describes the organisation of the traditional Kavirondo market and modern developments in trading.

One value of the book lies in theoretical excursions which show how economic transactions are embedded in (a) the social relations within the tribes concerned and (b) their value systems. As an instance illustrating (a) may serve the reaction of brotherless daughters to the claims made by their paternal uncles on their father's estate. It is not one of passive acquiescence as the theory of the replacement of the physical father by his classificatory substitute(s) may make us expect. Rather custom allows the daughters to recoup themselves to some extent from the estate. The influence of the tribal value system on economic transactions is seen in the insistence on a clear reciprocity of services. The bride-price transactions, structuring as they do the relations between two families over at least one, if not more generations, demonstrate that claims and rights are not based on a vague notion of kinship solidarity. "In every case where there is a legal claim to a kinsman's service, it is either derived from a similar service rendered to him on a previous occasion or linked with a counter-service in store for him on some definite future occasion". The fact that the reciprocal services are sometimes indirectly linked does not invalidate the

principle. "Pure" economists would do well to read the book for the light it throws on the complex associations of economic activities.

Another feature of the book is its wealth of comparative material. In the congeries of peoples which make up the North Kavirondo population the economic activities of the pastoral Vugusu and the non-pastoral Logoli are particularly well set out. One result of this contrasted approach is to show how neatly the collection and distribution of bride-cattle is a function of comparative wealth in cattle. The groups involved in both transactions are much narrower among the Logoli who have few cattle than among the Vugusu whose herds are large. The Logoli system is further complicated by stipulations concerning rights to increase of cows given or received as bride-price, and this for the same reason. Of great comparative interest is the difference depicted by Dr Wagner between land tenure as practised in the Kavirondo and Kikuyu systems. In Kavirondo clan ownership in land (in the sense of "communal control" of pasture and surplus lands) developed only after clans became political entities and it was superimposed upon a system of family ownership derived from first cultivation, inheritance and continued occupation. In the Kikuyu system the family land rights have been developed within the wider principle of clan seigniorship which is based on the clan founder's claim to hunting territory and in at least one instance on a purchase transaction with an alien tribe.

A third valuable feature is the author's concern with the traditional economy as seen against the tendencies of adjustment to modern conditions. For instance, he points out that the effect of the wholesale introduction of European consumer goods on native crafts is differential. While under this impact iron-work decays, pottery and basketry continue to thrive. A similarly interesting fact is that there is no relation between traditional and modern crafts even where they are similar. European-trained workers in wood are not descended from traditional wood-carving families; traditional dressmakers (in hides) do not adopt modern sewing techniques

from tailors. As a result of many such acute observations the book, which describes conditions as they existed twenty years ago, is still eminently readable to-day. It gives valuable illustrations of the sociology of contact phenomena such as cultural adjustment, resistance and selective borrowing.

The book is to be commended for the lucidity of its style and the clarity of its argument.

O.F.R.

**Études sur la langue luba.** A. COUPEZ. *Annales du Musée royal du Congo belge, Sciences de l'Homme, Linguistique, Volume 9.* Tervuren. 1954. 90 pp.

This book contains two distinct sections. The first one deals with some aspects of the verbal conjugations in Luba-Kasayi. Coupez does not pretend to give a full analysis of the verb in this language, which work has been done by L. Stappers, E. Willems, and particularly M. A. Meeussen. He merely gives a systematic outline of the verb in the form of formulas, a sort of supplement to and summary of previous works.

First, Coupez reviews the various prefixal, radical and suffixal morphemes used in the Luba-Kasayi conjugation, giving their respective tones in various contexts. He mentions the different types of radicals, which fall into three groups: CVC, VC, and CVVC. The value of the distinctions he makes between preprefix, covered prefix, uncovered prefix, infix, etc., seems doubtful. In some cases an "infix" becomes an "uncovered prefix": therefore it is no longer an "infix" according to Coupez's own definition of the term (which, incidentally, is not the more generally accepted one of a morpheme inserted within the root itself, but refers to any morpheme not occurring initially in a verbal form). This uncertainty of terminology is at times confusing for the reader.

In the following chapter, the author describes the various verbal tenses, giving in each case the characteristic morpheme(s) which enter(s) into their formation. A few examples are given to



illustrate each case. This chapter complements the first one, and makes it clearer and more concrete. A short chapter on tonal contractions, which is a summary of Meeussen's tonal rules, follows. In the last chapter of this first section, Coupez formulates a few conclusions on the grammatical and lexical role of tone in the verbal system of Luba-Kasayi.

This section is most interesting, despite the obvious limitations imposed by its shortness. It gives an insight into some of the major features of the Luba-Kasayi verb, which makes the reader eager to learn more about this aspect of the language.

The second section has as object the establishment of correspondences between Proto-Bantu and Luba-Kasayi segmental and suprasegmental phonemes.

Coupez says that length is phonemically significant in Luba, but gives four cases where it seems rather to be characteristic. As he does not illustrate these statements, one is left in doubt as to their validity. Four "tonemes", high, low, rising and falling, are postulated—almost certainly more than actually exist in the language.

Coupez gives a table of "phonèmes segmentaux" (see p. 47), i.e., the phonetic segments of the language, but no phonemic table is given at any stage. Statements that Proto-Bantu \**p* becomes *p* in Luba if preceded by a nasal and *f* in other cases ("p est réalisé *p* après la nasale, et *f* dans les autres cas", p. 40), that \**j* remains unchanged if preceded by a nasal (see page 56), make it clear that Coupez uses a non-phonemic approach. He mentions that \**g* does not change if preceded by a nasal, and gives in illustration of this statement the following example: \**ng* > *ŋ* : \*(*n*)*gòmá* (drum) > *ŋómá* (see p. 57). This shows a totally non-phonemic analysis, and also makes one wonder where Coupez perceives a voiced velar explosive in the Luba-Kasayi word *ŋómá*, resulting from Proto-Bantu \*(*n*)*gòmá*.

At the end of this section, Coupez mentions the fact that a high tone of Proto-Bantu corresponds to a low tone in Luba-Kasayi, and an original low tone gives a high tone in this

language: e.g., \*-*átò* (boat, pirogue) > -*àtú* in Luba-Kasayi.

This whole section, otherwise interesting and useful, is marred by a confusion of phonetics and phonemics which destroys a good deal of its value. The inclusion of tones for the Proto-Bantu forms and their Luba-Kasayi equivalents, and a long list of Proto-Bantu roots with the corresponding forms in the modern language, are some of the features which add enormously to the value of this section, and make it a useful tool for all students of Bantu languages.

P-D. COLE-BEUCHAT

**Ngbandi-Idioticon, I Nederlands-Frans en Ngbandi.** B. LEKENS and G. MENS. Tervuren, Belgium. 1955. xxvii+1091 pp.

This large publication is Volume 3, Tome 1, of the Linguistic section of "Sciences de l'Homme" of the "Annales du musée du Congo Belge", Tervuren. It follows the earlier work of Lekens, his *Dictionnaire Ngbandi*, which had two parts, *Français-Ngbandi* and *Ngbandi-Français*, and comprised Volume 1 of the same series in 1952.

Ngbandi is a Sudanic language spoken mainly in the Ubangi district of Northern Congo Belge, but also found in the adjoining French territory. Lekens reports over 100,000 Ngbandi speakers in Ubangi; but says that it is very widely understood, and that the official "lingua franca" of the adjoining parts of French Equatorial Africa, viz., Sango, is "een dialect van het Ngbandi". He claims for it very considerable importance, as having influence over a number of inland Belgian Congo languages, such as Ngombe, Mbanza and Ngbaka, where Ngbandi is known and considered "de taal van het opperhoofd", and the "artistocratische taal van het land".

Of the introductory pages, ix to xxvii are devoted to a phonetic and short grammatical outline, written by Lekens. Seven vowel phonemes and five nasalized vowels are described; while among the consonants the implosives with



velar stop, *gb*, *ngb*, *kpw* and *kpm* are especially to be noticed. There is a brief exposition of Tone, which plays an important part in the language, and is fully recorded throughout the dictionary.

The dictionary itself occupies pages 2-1016 (double column), and is arranged in alphabetical order according to the Nederlands. Each entry is followed by the French equivalent, and then by the Ngbandi. The most significant aspect of this dictionary is the fullness of illustrative material given with the majority of the entries. Great numbers of Nederlands phrases and idiomatic (and ordinary) sentences are given, followed in each case by the Ngbandi equivalents, which again are followed by a literal Nederlands translation in each case. This part of the work tends to be greatly overdone. Many of the phrases chosen are quite unnecessary or repetitive. For example, the possessive pronouns appear with great numbers of nouns, and many of the sentences are so straightforward as not to require recording. Under "neus" for instance, the first seven examples are: "mijn neus", "uw neus", "Hij heeft een platte neus", "Hij heeft een kromme neus", "Hij heeft een lange neus", "Hij heeft een scherpe neus", "Hij heeft een scheve neus". After these come some sentences of more moment; but much space is taken up with material of little moment.

Similarly the translations are often given in a great variety of ways, each way being followed by the Nederlands word-for-word translation. Under "honger", for instance, is the sentence "Ik rammel van de honger"; this has no less than nine variant renderings in the Ngbandi, each followed by literal explanation, the treatment of this one sentence thus occupying 19 lines of the dictionary. But perhaps, after all, this sentence is important among the people!

As was noticed when reviewing Leken's earlier work (in *African Studies*, Vol. 11, p. 15), it must be pointed out that, in this book too, the part of speech has not been indicated against any of the entries. This is surely a drawback, and detracts from the scientific value of the work. The book is obviously designed for the use of Europeans,

and not for African enquirers; but it could have been condensed very considerably, and gained in value thereby.

But, putting aside the above criticisms, the authors have done a great piece of work, and made available much valuable material. The last 75 pages of this book (pp. 1017-1091) are devoted to translations and equivalents of a large number of Nederlands proverbs and idiomatic sayings, arranged under a number of headings. This constitutes a valuable collection.

The authors are obviously enthusiasts for Ngbandi, as every language researcher and recorder should be for the language he is working on. The publishers are to be congratulated on producing such clear-print, easily-read pages. It augurs well for linguistic studies in Africa, when the Musée du Congo Belge puts out such publications as this.

C.M.D.

**Bantu Literature and Life.** R. H. W. SHEPHERD.

The Lovedale Press, Lovedale. 1955. v+198 pp. illus. 5s. 6d.

In history we tend to deal with governments and policies, we talk of chiefs and governors and kings. We often forget the small men who lived in these times, and felt the times much more than our governors, or landdrosts or chiefs perhaps. Most people who have buried themselves in historical documents must, at one time or another, have fallen victim to that delightful common temptation of reading, say the apparently unimportant columns in an old newspaper that tell of some small insignificant man—columns that seem nevertheless to bring a touch, a feeling of reality to the bygone days, a feeling which seems to be lacking in the more ambitious treatises that concern themselves with the big issues and policies.

This book is composed of short biographical sketches which are the result of following such byways of research, written by one who quite clearly has done extensive research into the history of the mission stations on the former



eastern frontier of the Cape. So wide is the scope of the book that it would be difficult to find a suitable title for this work that covers names such as van Riebeeck and van der Kemp, Ntsikana and Sir George Grey, Tiyo Soga and the Mendi, the Galla slaves and Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu. *Bantu Literature and Life* is certainly not a happy choice. By far the greatest number of people mentioned here are either of Xhosa origin or men who laboured in that tribe, so that it is more Xhosa than representative of the Bantu even in the Union. Nor is it a study of literature in the usual sense of the term.

That the book is valuable cannot be denied. It was originally written because the author was convinced that "it is eminently desirable that Africans should know more of their own country's history and outstanding figures, and also of those co-operative efforts between Black and White. . . ." Not only is this desirable for Africans, it is also desirable for *all* the inhabitants of this country, whose need to know more and more about one another cannot be over-emphasized. The biographical sketches are well written, some with considerable feeling. The labours of all these men—White and Black—for the betterment of the African people have been described by one who loves the work they did, and who admires them no less because he mentions what he considers to have been their weaknesses. A few of his opinions—happily only

a few—show just how powerful a factor the so-called frontier tradition is even to-day. (This is not strange, because we learn from this very book that Theal, the historian, was at one time a teacher at Lovedale!). But no one can question the sincerity of all his opinions, whether one shares them or not.

One of the most valuable sections in this book is that which carries the challenging title: "Wanted—African Authors." In it the author makes an extremely valuable suggestion: "One of South Africa's greatest needs is an all-African publishing house, asking no favours, seeking no patronage or props from others, and working on strictly competitive lines . . . Until such a publishing house appears, there is nothing to be gained by inveighing against those of another race who will not, or cannot, accept the productions of African pens." While stressing the need for African authors who will compete with English and Afrikaans authors in the open market, using either official languages, his opinions on whether the Bantu languages have any future as literary media are indeed most telling and deserve greater publicity among Whites and Blacks. His ideas on "African Creative Writing" show how well the author has familiarized himself with trends in Bantu literature, especially Xhosa, as well as with the problems that beset their future development.

S. M. M.

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